

THE
BRITISH MONTHS;
POEM,
IN TWELVE PARTS.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

— — — — —
Lord, who would live turmoiled in the Court,
And may enjoy such quiet walks as these ?

SHAKESPEARE, *King Henry VI*, Part 2.

Did he not moralize this spectacle ?
O, yes, into a thousand similes

SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like it*

LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC XXXV.

TO THE READER.

WHOE'ER thou art, to whom 'tis joy to flee
From the world's haunts, not by its lures beguil'd,
Of taste yet pure, of manners undefil'd.
And gaze untir'd on sky, and earth, and sea ;
To whom the song of birds is harmony,
And beauty the meek floret of the wild :
Oh Nature's simple, unperturbed Child,
For thee I write, and crave a friend in thee !
Come, hand in hand with me her ways explore,
Mark'd by the year's beginning, growth, decline '
What hinders but we draw of thoughts a store,
Pleasant and good, from that abundant mine ?
But oft to pause forget not, and adore
By nature's works reveal'd the CAUSE DIVINE !

R., D. & C.

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JANUARY.

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JANUARY.



WHAT symptoms through their annual range
Attend the MONTHS' perpetual change,
As suns successive set and rise,
Revolving round our BRITISH skies:
Still varying with the varying year,
What rural SOUNDS salute the ear;
The eye what rural SIGHTS; the scent
What AIRS, of fragrance redolent:
In field and woodland, hill and dell,
What PLANTS of nature's garden dwell, 10
And duly at her call display
Their odours, hues, and fair array:
What BIRDS perennially delight,
Or rest from migratory flight,
In Britain's hospitable groves;
Their dwellings, musick, cares, and loves:
Be these my THEME! Of objects fraught
With pleasure and improving thought
Observant, Thou, whose forms I choose
My subject, O, be Thou my Muse, 20
NATURE, Great Parent! Rather THOU,
To whom with due allegiance bow,
Nature, and all her works, and all
That this blue vault, this pendent ball,
And this interminable sea
Inhabit, form'd of old by THEE,

By THEE sustain'd, and moving still
 Obedient to Thy sovereign will;
 Instruct me how to read aright
 Creation's volume, where thy might 30
 And boundless Godhead shine reveal'd.
 That contemplation's hours may yield
 A blameless pleasure to the sense;
 And, studious of instruction, thence
 Thoughts of sublimer mood impart,
 Inform the mind, improve the heart!

What pleasure feel we here below,
 Beyond what NATURE'S CHARMS bestow?
 What less reprobable can be,
 More free from harm, from blame more free? 40
 What more abundant in delight,
 Or to the hearing, smell, or sight?
 What more instructive to the mind,
 To wholesome pensiveness inclin'd?
 What furnish'd more with feelings bland,
 The heart's best yearnings to expand?
 Chief, if the thought, not meanly pent
 To things of sense, find ampler vent,
 And soar a loftier flight abroad,
 Thro' nature up to NATURE'S GOD: 50
 Then most of all, if, as we look
 Around on God's material book,
 Creation's volume, to our eye
 Unclos'd his other volume lie;
 And all that live, and breathe, and move,
 In earth beneath and heav'n above,
 Be to his publish'd will referr'd,
 And measur'd by his written word:

That word, which prompts us to descry
His glory in the expanded sky; 60
And in retentive mind to keep
His wonders in the circling deep;
Sends us to beasts and creeping things,
To every bird that round us wings
His airy flight on pinions fleet,
And every flow'r beneath our feet;
Lessons of holy life to learn,
And God in all his works discern.

Who then shall censure, if I trace
The opening year's progressive pace, 70
And, as its months advancing move,
From land or sea, from air or grove,
Scenes of innocuous pleasure choose;
Scenes which the meditative Muse
May best, as likes her best, array
In simple, unpretending lay;
And proffer to the ear or eye
The mimic charms, till matter high
Be thence of pure instruction sought,
Fit scope for salutary thought? 80
If little worth the poet's praise,
Nor brightly shine the woodland bays,
No word the rural Muse shall speak
To wake a blush on virtue's cheek,
Raise honest zeal's indignant rod,
Or do dishonour to my God.
Nay, rather be the lay unsung,
Unnerv'd my hand, and mute my tongue;
Than e'er a verse, these fingers write,
May seem offensive in his sight; 90

JANUARY—ITS TWOFOLD ASPECT.

Or from these lips a sentence fall,
Dishonouring Him who gives me all!

Hail, first, the firstling of the year,
Which, duly marshall'd in his rear,
The train of months successive leads,
Dark JANUARY! But though in weeds
Of mourning muffled, and at first
In gloom, perchance in tempest nurst;
Like him, another and the same,
The two-faced god, from whom its name 100
Transmitted from old Rome it bears,
The month by just succession wears
A double aspect. Backward one
On dull mid-winter's gloom is thrown,
And thence reflected shows the mark
Of frowns, and tears, and features dark.
Forward to scenes that distant lie
The other casts a longing eye,
Where spring's delightful hours advance;
And, cheer'd by that prospective glance, 110
On his dim cheek appear the whiles
Faint gleams of joy and sickly smiles.

Yes, JANUARY's wintry face
Oft with as dark and deep a trace
The season's furrowing wrinkles plough,
As mid December's clouded brow.
As deep the snow o'erwhelms the plains;
As firm the frost the streams inchains;
And ev'n, as old experience says
In rustick saw, with "lengthening days" 120

On nature's works the "strengthening cold"
Oft keeps a firmer longer hold.

Who has not heard, how FROST austere,
So EVELYN tells*, the opening year,
Last of the second Charles's reign,
'Chose for his dwelling and domain
Imperial Thames's stately flood ;
Form'd of his waves a solid road
For coach and sledge, where plied before
The bellying sail and dripping oar ; 130
And London throng'd in booth and stall
To hold a sportful carnival ?

Who has not heard, what gentle GAY
Records in TRIVIA's† playful lay,
How Thames, with frosted osiers crown'd,
Saw three long moons his current bound,
And felt the wheels all smoothly glide,
And whitening rase his harden'd tide ?

Who has not heard, that takes delight
In nature's scenes, what pleasing WHITE, 140
Her favourite votary, tells, again
How Thames receiv'd the icy chain ; .
And London saw throughout her range
A scene Laplandian, wild and strange,
And through her streets, by day, by night,
Mute stillness reign'd, and dumb affright‡ ?

And who with mindful thought the space
Of twice ten years can backward trace,

* Diary, Jan. 24, 1684.

† Gay's Trivia, B. ii. v. 357—366.

‡ White's Natural History of Selborne. Letter 62 to the Hon. Daines Barrington, describing January 1776.

Nor find inroll'd, that opening year,
What fog the smoky atmosphere
Obscur'd; what cold, his waves congeal'd,
The Thames' majestick course withheld? 150

Six dismal days from morn till night,
A week's eclipse, no ray of light
Was seen to stream, no cheerful sound
Was echoed from the snow-clad ground.
The noontide lamp illum'd your home:
But, if constrain'd abroad to roam,
Where feebly strove the torches' ray
To shed an artificial day, 160

A beacon thro' the well-known street;
With eyes perplex'd, and treacherous feet,
You crept along in silent awe:
No coming passenger you saw,
You heard no wheels approaching roll,
You felt the darkness in your soul.
Then came the frost: and week by week
Imperial Thames you saw not seek
His ocean goal. In peace he slept:
Or, if his seaward course he kept, 170
As old Alphæus far from day
Held on his subterranean way,
So Father Thames, by none beheld,
His flood beneath the ice propell'd.*
And then the thaw: and then again
You saw him hastening to the main,
Throng'd with accumulated piles,
Masses of ice and floating isles.

SUCH SCENES as these, so dark and drear,
Have mark'd our England's NEW-BORN YEAR. 180

But scenes, so drear and dark as these,
 Our southern climate rarely sees ;
 Siberian fogs, Icelandic frosts,
 More meet for Hyperborean coasts
 Beyond the habitable world ;
 Where Britain's sons have late unfurl'd
 Their country's cross, intent to find
 The floods, if floods there be, that bind
 Northward, with yet unravell'd chain,
 The eastern to the western main.

190

Yet FOG, and FROST, and dreary SNOW,
 Enough our wintry seasons know.

Then happy he, whose pleasant home,
 When the harsh times forbid to roam
 His cautious footsteps, can supply
 A WALK PROTECTED, warm, and dry.

In much—(tho' now fastidious pride
 Our fathers' gothick taste deride ;)
 In much—(tho' much the cultur'd mind
 Has by nice tact improv'd, refined ;)
 Yet still in much, that lingering bears
 The vestige of departed years,
 I love that antiquated taste !

200

The trim and stately garden, graced
 With vistas deep, which through and through
 Lead the pleas'd eye ; the avenue
 Of loftier structure, and more wide
 Of space, but clos'd on either side
 With branching arms, a cool retreat
 For musing 'mid the summer heat ;

210

And the rais'd terrace, where a screen
 One side of cheerful evergreen
 Shuts in from biting blasts, and one
 Uncover'd courts the midday sun :
 A WINTER WALK, secure and warm,
 And shelter'd from the northern storm,
 Of dark green cypress, darker yew,
 Or holly's lighter, livelier hue,
 Not trick'd and trimm'd to every form
 Of bird, and beast, and fish, and worm, 220
 Which lives in wide creation's range,
 Or fancy feigns, grotesque and strange :
 But high, the passing head to hide ;
 And thick, to turn the drift aside ;
 And moderate length, that health the space
 Without satiety may pace,
 And interchange of objects find
 To charm the eye, amuse the mind.

Such terrace still maintains its hold
 In some MANORIAL MANSION old, 230
 Where with the window's mullion'd bow
 It joins, and portal arch, to show
 To antiquarian eyes the date
 And grandeur of its pristine state :
 Or relique of a graver age,
 In some time-honour'd PARSONAGE, '
 Whose gable roof and oaken door,
 With knobs of iron studded o'er,
 And venerable depth of porch,
 Claim kindred with the neighbouring church. 240
 Such is thy verdant WALL OF YEW,
 To whom my passing thanks are due,

Erewhile MY NURSE; in whom, alone
 Of OXFORD's classick towers, are shown,
 Though quaint, yet pleasing, high and dense
 The comforts of that living fence,
 A long-drawn range of pannels green,
 Pillars' and portals arch'd between.

And such was once thy HOLLY WALL*,
 Good EVELYN! Thick, extended, tall. 250
 Thy hands dispos'd the seedlings fair;
 They throve beneath thy fostering care:
 Four hundred feet in length they throve,
 Thrice three they rose in height above.
 Glittering with arm'd and varnish'd leaves,
 Secure 'gainst weather, beasts, and thieves,
 Blushing with native coral red,
 Refreshment and delight they shed
 About thy path, and still diffuse
 O'er thy mild page perennial hues. 260
 That page, which England's king erewhile
 Approv'd with gratulating smile,
 And bade with waving woods be crown'd
 Her treeless deserts, whence the sound
 Of her dread voice has since been heard
 O'er Ocean's reign. But more endear'd
 Good EVELYN, is thy honour'd name,
 For true devotion's fervent flame,
 From wild o'erheated fancies free;
 Pure faith, and dutious loyalty. 270
 Who, when "each tree of noblest kind
 For sight, smell, taste," intranc'd thy mind,

* See the description in his "Discourse of Forest Trees,"
 B. i. Ch. xxi.

Didst still their glorious Author bless:
 Nor to his holy volume less
 Devoted, in thy green retreat,
 And with his church in union sweet,
 Held'st on thy lengthen'd pilgrimage,
 The truly wise, the CHRISTIAN sage!
 Who, when their frosts upon thy head
 Had four and fourscore winters shed, 280
 Look'dst backward on thy bygone days
 With heart of thankfulness and praise
 For blessings granted; and with pray'r
 For grace to aid, for love to spare,
 Look'dst forward to thy day of doom;
 And left'st for record on thy tomb
 This simple, true, and heavenly strain,
 "What is not honest, is but vain:
 Nor solid wisdom can there be
 But in substantial piety.*" 290

O might such wisdom pour its rays
 To lighten our self-vaunted days!
 O might such fruits, (and ne'er before
 Did strong and sad occasion more
 Prompt the heart's wish,) might works like thine
 Ev'n now in Britain's patriots shine!
 Thy life a monument to show
 What charms from nature's study flow;
 That bliss resides with godly zeal;
 That private worth is publick weal; 300
 And, who would take the proper road
 To profit men, must serve his God!

* See the life of Evelyn, prefixed to Dr. Hunter's edition of his "Silva," p. 24.

Thus do my thoughts thy worth recall,
As, pacing by thy HOLLY WALL,
Thou risest, EVELYN, to my sight
'Mid all thy innocent delight.
Such holly wall, if mine the choice,
By magick wand or plastick voice
To fashion, what may best combine
Pleasure and health, such wall were mine. 310

But, failing such, THIS COVER'D WAY
Contents me! Lo, the sunny ray
Falls on it full before. Behind
The house protects it from the wind.
In front a smooth and slanting green;
But, varying still the pleasant scene,
Here spreads a range of level plots,
With box-fringed beds, where lurking knots
Of buried flow'rs repose, to bring
Kind greeting to the early spring. 320
There terrac'd eminences rise,
Step above step: there bending lies
The lawn in one continuous slope:
And there, within its sinuous scope,
The laurel bright, and laurustine,
And bay, and arbutus combine,
With berry, bell, and blooming flower,
Regardless of the stormy stour,
To form my garden's verdant bound.
And there, beyond that wood-clad mound, 330
The gravell'd walk receding bends
Its gentle curve, and thence extends
Along the shrubbery's varied edge,
Along the laurel's thickset hedge,

O'er which the shapely poplars climb,
Alder, and fir, and beech, and lime,
Thro' deeper shades on either hand
That border on the salt sea strand.

Above the spire-mark'd town remote
You see the smoky vapour float, 340
Which tells how much more sweet and fair
Our rural scene, our healthful air.
Between us flows the ocean tide,
An harbour lake; where safely ride,
As shallops in a land-lock'd pond,
Ships of the sea. And yet beyond,
Skirting the lake, and like a bow
In graceful curvature, a row
Of lofty mountains sweeps along,
In varied shapes; and there a throng 350
Of hamlets fair you see beneath,
And grove-clad seats: above, with heath
Embrown'd, and frowning o'er the waves,
Its knolls and glens and peaks and caves
Shows the tall summit, where you trace
Day after day the resting place,
Wherein the setting sun goes down:
Now southward of that clouded town,
To those north-western trees, that show
On the slant hill where latest glow. 360
His summer rays, and bright in fold
Sky, mountain, lake in floating gold

'Tis PLEASANT to the mind, the thought
By opening January brought,

That now the hasty-footed SUN
On vault the most deprest has run
His BRIEFEST COURSE: that day by day
His track about the heaven's high way
Will form a wider, loftier arch;
And earlier, to attend his march, 370
Call forth the slumbering hours, nor leave
So soon to rest the shadowy eve.

Not that 'tis well to wish away
A month, or week, or passing day,
Or fleeting hour, or smallest space
Mark'd on the dial's changeful face.
For who can tell what awful pow'r
Month, week, or day, or fleeting hour,
Or moment by the dial told,
May on our endless being hold; 380
What each quick waning point may breed,
And what may next to each succeed?
Behoves us therefore to devote,
As down the stream of life they float,
Or long or short, the passing days
To works of love, our Maker's praise,
Thankful for each, that still among
The living greets us, short or long.
But as, by His supreme decree,
Who first commanded time to be, 390
Whate'er we wish, it still will run
Its progress, and to-morrow's sun
Still press on that which shines to day,
And days successive pass away:
'Tis sweet, and innocent withal,
To note o'er this our earthly ball

'The growing arch; each morn and night
 Enjoy the still progressive light;
 And hail in his expanded wing
 Faint symptoms of returning spring. 400

Is there a heart that beats and lives,
 To which no joy the spring-time gives?
 Alas! in that unfeeling heart
 Nor love nor kindliness has part;
 Or chilling want, or pining care
 Must brood, or comfortless despair.
 Blest, who without profane alloy
 Can revel in that blameless joy!
 More blest, in every welcome hour,
 If spring-time smile, or winter lower, 410
 Who round him scatter'd hears or sees
 What still the excursive sense may please;
 Who round him finds, perchance unsought,
 Fresh matter for improving thought;
 And more, the more he looks abroad,
 Marks, owns, and loves the present God!

Tempestuous was the night and drear,
 Which bade farewell the parting year:
 Calm is the day, the storms withdrawn,
 Which marks the NEW YEAR'S PLACID DAWN. 420
 Calm is the day, and scarce a breeze
 Or waves or whispers thro' the trees,
 Yet peeping forth no sunny ray
 Gives warmth or brightness to the day.
 But a dense fog o'erwhelming hides
 The mountain's head, and feet, and sides,

And rests upon the ocean stream ;
Till yon projecting headland seem,
Uplifted through the misty shroud,
In the mid air a long dark cloud ; 430
And boats and ships, that anchor nigh,
Seem hanging in the mantling sky.
Thus wanders oft from judgment right,
As of the eye, the mental sight,
Of things, with darkening shades indued,
And through a TREACHEROUS MEDIUM view'd.
When pride or earthly passions reign,
Or prejudice, or fancies vain
Spread an obscuring mist around ;
They blunt the eyesight, and confound 440
Together things of earth and sky,
And God's own truth appears a lie.

Disporting in the foggy air,
Light swarms of INSECTS, here and there,
The laurel-skirted pathway o'er,
Or by the branching fir-trees soar.
Now playful round and round they wheel :
Now changeful thread the mazy reel,
Above, below, and in and out,
Like OBERON'S legendary rout, 450
When on mid Summer's haunted eve,
The merry dance the fairies weave.
Whence come they, when produced, and how ?
Is it their first of being now,
Their birth-day ? Or did winter keep,
Born long ago, their life in sleep

Suspended? Or with senses keen
And wakeful, from the embowering green
Mark'd they the fitting time to ply
Their gambols in the open sky? 460
What warning voice, what genial pow'r,
Invites them forth this wintry hour:
No sunny ray abroad, to warm
The juices of their tiny form;
To wave their thin and filmy wing,
No gentle gale of balmy spring;
But breath instead of clammy fog,
Might seem more apt their wings to clog,
And their too slender frame to thrill
With the sharp shaft of breezes chill? 470

The instinct strong, the hidden cause,
Which to their feelings speaks, and draws
The wanderers from their secret seat,
Their birth-place, or their snug retreat,
Full little know we: but we know
The CAUSE SUPREME, to which they owe
Life, motion, all things; and we see
Proof of his vast benignity,
Which, ever active, o'er the earth's
Broad surface spreads unnumber'd births, 480
O'er land and air, the springs, the floods;
Which first for each their proper broods
Created, and preserves them all:
And feeble as they are, and small,
Gives to these insects, void of care,
Strong in his strength, to wing the air,
Or in the dark green fir-trees house,
Or lurk within the laurel boughs;

Provides them with befitting form,
To shun or to endure the storm ;
Instructs the proper time to know,
At home to rest, afield to go,
With implements of joy indued,
And fills with gladness as with food.

490

FEW are the FEATHER'D TRIBES, that now
From field or garden, bank or bough,
With nimble flight, or perching nigh,
Amusive greet the wandering eye :
Still fewer they, whose voices cheer
With melody the listening ear.

500

Last in the by-gone year to fail,
If fail he did ; the first to hail,
With tribute of observance due
And song, the opening of the new,
The REDBREAST from his perch on high
Chirps his brisk call or prompt reply ;
And now and then expands his throat,
To trill a sweeter, softer note.

Across my path, from laurel bush
Quick starting, as his pinions brush
The surface of the shrubby ground ;
Join'd with his feathers' rustling sound
The BLACKBIRD'S gurgling notes betray
His hasty flight : and still as day
Receding cautions him to flee
For slumber to his roosting tree,
His long repeated strains disclose
The station of his night's repose.

510

Nor wants there oft the whistle shrill,
But tuneful, from his yellow bill, 520
Sweet prelude of the richer song,
Which spring shall prompt, and love prolong.

Nor prelude of sweet musick, troll'd
More richly, does the THRUSH withhold,
Chief when he mounts on elm-tree high,
And wakes his early minstrelsy
To gratulate the morning mild:
Or if from noontide skies have smil'd
The sun's warm rays, or sinking leave
Their lustre on the brow of eve. 530

Again, delightful birds, again
Resume, repeat, protract the strain:
If e'er neglected or despis'd,
'Twould now be sought, admir'd, and priz'd.
Each bill, that 'mid the silence sings,
A new peculiar pleasure brings;
A special pleasure, that exceeds
The intrinsick worth; for rareness breeds
Ev'n of itself a proper joy,
Unapt the sated mind to cloy: 540
And sounds, long undiscern'd, like these,
With freshness, as with sweetness please.

But hark! from top of loftiest beech
The MISSEL-COCK's untuneful screech!
Not like the rich and varied note
Melodious from the throistle's throat;
But a distrest, discordant scream,
As if for day's departing beam

To mourn, or with sad presage meet
 The embryo storm of rain or sleet. 550
 More tuneful, when he takes his stand
 'Mid the warm sunshine, where at hand
 On hawthorn, elm, or maple grow
 The boughs of pale green misseltoe;
 And plucks its yellow globes, or feeds
 On the dark ivy's berried seeds.
 And sure I ne'er have heard a song,
 More clear, more full, more rich, more strong,
 Tho' mix'd at times with harsher note,
 Than issued from his evening throat: 560
 What time I've seen the breezes blow
 His form, all heedless, to and fro;
 And heard him, as beneath I stood,
 Pour forth his musick's changeful flood.

And SMALLER BRETHREN of the air,
 Some singly scatter'd here and there,
 Some that in flocks assembled throng,
 Invite the rambling foot along:
 Such birds as covet not to roam,
 But make their native fields their home. 570
 The SPARROW brown; the LINNET gray;
 The white-wing'd CHAFFINCH, brisk and gay,
 Tho' yet constrain'd alone to wait
 The arrival of his roving mate;
 So quick and small that scarce the eye
 Can catch them, as they creep or fly,
 The sprightly "WREN with little quill*;"
 And HEDGEROW TITLING's pleasant bill;

* Shakespeare's *Mids. Night's Dream*.

Bright BUNTINGS, flitting on beside
 The well-trod path ; and TITS that glide 580
 Half-hidden mid the alder spray,
 And hunt from bough to bough their prey.

But tho' the sight their form descrie,
 'Tis but the pinions, hurrying by
 The quick-set bank or new-turn'd ground,
 That warn the hearing ; or the sound,
 If vocal sound their presence speak,
 Of lively chirp, or twitter weak.
 Small is their voice's tuneful pow'r,
 Or waits for spring's inspiring hour. 590
 But nor unwelcome is the call
 Imperfect of their voices small,
 Nor, as in fluttering flocks they fly,
 The noise of pinions hurrying by,
 To those, for whom with charms abound
 Each rural sight, each rural sound.
 With such, altho' of faint pretence
 To please the nice fastidious sense,
 The twitter, chirp, and rustling wing
 Wake the kind heart's responsive string, 600
 And, blithe with being, seem to say,
 "See us alive, and brisk, and gay!"

Heard you that chatter harsh and loud,
 From tangled hedge, or woodland shroud?
 Look, and you'll see the forward spring,
 And quick vibration of the wing,
 And dazzling gleams of black and white,
 That shew the MAGPIE's restless flight!

That black and white, with mingled hue
Of purple, green, and glossy blue, 610
Mark 'mong the fairest to the eye
Of Britain's birds the chattering Pie.
That noisy chatter, harsh and crude,
The watch-cry loud, the clamour rude,
Make him of Britain's birds appear
'Mong the least lovely to the ear.
And sure I deem ingenuous hearts
Will little love his sprightly parts,
To all within his reach confest
The common dread, the common pest: 620
A glass, where forward manners bold,
By no meek sense of shame controll'd;
Voracity, that nothing spares;
And heartless selfishness, that cares
For none; and thievish fraud, may see
Types of their own deformity.

How different is the warbling LARK,
Who now, when fade the shadows dark,
Again exults to feel the reign
Of winter loose its pinching chain; 630
Again, as innocent as gay,
At heaven's gate sings his matin lay!
Plain is his suit of sober brown,
His speckled vest, and dusky crown;
Apparel meet for one, whose rest
Is on the open fallow's breast,
Tho' little apt to win the prize
Of elegance in common eyes.

But never yet was bosom found
So dull of sense to musick's sound, 640
As not to linger on the way,
And list to his ascending lay,
And upward gaze with straining sight,
And see him melting into light ;
Till the eye fail its part to bear
In concert with the hearing ear :
And nought remain but what may seem
Imagination's fairy dream,
Or the sweet strain, if such things were,
Of Prospero's spirit in the air. 650

O for that strength of voice and wing,
To sing and soar, to soar and sing,
With all his joyousness of heart,
From earth's incumbrances apart ;
And with heaven's denizens on high
To revel 'mid the calm clear sky !
But 'twill not be ! Of mortal birth
Still earthly things will sink to earth.
As from his loftiest, longest flight,
From bathing in ethereal light, 660
The little bird descends again
To sojourn on the lowly plain :
So the rapt soul, howe'er she spring
Aloft on strong devotion's wing,
Must feel at times subdued her power ;
And from her speculative tower
To earth with folded pinions droop,
And to material objects stoop.
O when, her earthly sojourn o'er,
Shall she for ever sing and soar ! 700

But if the woodland and the field
Their feather'd tribes more scanty yield;
More full, the wintry coast along,
The assembled FLOCKS of OCEAN throng.
Some, native birds perennial: some
From inland moor or freshet come,
To winter on the fishy shore:
And some from far-off regions froze,
Where reigns uncheer'd a dayless night,
I have hither sped their annual flight. 710
Now o'er our heads compact they fly:
See! as we speak, careering high
A flock of WILD DUCKS clouds the air,
In wedge-like shape triangular;
And GREY GEESE there outstretch'd combine
Their troop in one unbroken line.
Now in small bands dispers'd, or each
His prey pursuing, o'er the beach
On long lank legs they wade; divide
Deep down the gulphy flood, and glide 720
Afar unseen; or rising meet
The breasting wave, with oary feet
Their strokes alternating advance,
And cleave secure the deep expanse.

Who could the multitudes describe
Profuse of Ocean's winged tribe?
Yet some of most conspicuous race
The Muse with graphick touch would trace,
As now, her watchful gaze before,
They harbour on the wintry shore. 730

Along the salt sea's oozy verge,
 Where wafted high the ebbing surge
 Unshelter'd leaves the shelly fry;
 Hark! the CURLEW's tumultuous cry.
 Not, as remote from human sight
 In lonely pairs their vernal flight
 They speed o'er heathy mountain rude,
 Or some waste marsh's solitude,
 In the tall grass, or bristling reed,
 Their wild unnestled young to breed. 740
 But now along the peopled coast,
 In densely congregated host,
 Yet heedful of the threatening gun,
 Aloft on bluish legs they run:
 Or delve, with slender bill and bow'd,
 The yielding sand: or shouting loud,
 To warn the comrades of their way,
 Lest darkling from the line they stray,
 Wake the dull night with startling sounds:
 Well might you deem the deep-mouth'd hounds 750
 Ruis'd in full cry the huntsman's peal,
 Or clamour'd for their morning meal.

On legs that scorn the circling tide,
 And lift on high his unwash'd side,
 His crested head right forward bent,
 With well-pois'd bill, and eyes intent,
 Like patient angler, on the strand
 Behold the watchful HERON stand!
 All ready, like the lightning's glance,
 To strike, if heedless fish advance, 760
 Or slimy reptile cross his way;
 And gorge him with the struggling prey.

And what are they, who roam the shore
Alert on active foot ; explore
With wedge-like bill the oyster's shell ;
Scoop from his rock-incrusting cell
The adhesive limpet ; and upheave,
Where worms and sea-born insects cleave,
The weed-clad stone ? The varied vest,
Sable and white ; and oft the breast 770
With gorget white adorn'd ; the bill
Of orange, with instinctive skill
Inform'd, and legs of sanguine die,
Bespeak the OCEAN-HAUNTING PIE.

More fleet on nimble wing the GULL
Sweeps booming by, intent to cull
Voracious from the billow's breast,
Mark'd far away, his destin'd feast.
Behold him now deep-plunging dip
His snowy pinion's sable tip 780
In the green wave : now lightly skim
With wheeling flight the water's brim,
Wave in blue sky his silver sail
Aloft, and frolick with the gale :
Or sink again, his breast to lave,
And float upon the foaming wave.
Oft o'er his form your eyes may roam,
Nor know him from the feathery foam :
Nor 'mid the roaring waves your ear,
Or yelling blast, his clamours hear. 790

With cape and kerchief chestnut-red,
Enveloping his neck and head ;
About his back and shoulders thrown
Of sable black a glossy zone,

Cincturing him round ; beyond beset
 With lines of silver and of jet
 In thin alternate waves, which veil
 The body to the silver tail :
 His freckled wing the POCHARD folds
 From close compacted flight, and holds 800
 His dwelling on the inland moor,
 Or windings of the briny shore.

See, where the tide advancing bends
 Along the oozy strand, extends
 A column long and dark : and, lo !
 A moment, and that long dark row
 Is all in motion ! See it pass
 Brushing the smooth and liquid glass,
 The sunshine hiding ; like the breath
 Of ruffling gales, the expanse beneath 810
 Disturbing ; or the inky shroud
 Swift sailing of a showery cloud.
 In marshall'd rank the WIGEONS there
 Are active for their fishy fare :
 List ! and perhaps, as off they fly,
 You'll hear them pipe their gathering cry.

Of wings, which wavy crescents deck,
 Grey, white, and black ; of slender neck,
 And head with sable crown'd ; but light
 The frontlet, and the cheeks of white ; 820
 Their dwelling with their kindred hold
 The CLACKIS GEESE. What fable old
 With legendary fondness tells,
 Of ship-wreck'd timber, and the shells
 There form'd by ocean's plastick spume,
 Instinct with life ; till first the plume,

Then, each to each succeeding still,
The feet, the legs, the adhesive bill,
Protruded from the parent tree
Depend ; and, plunging in the sea, 830
Fledg'd, and with active 'pow'rs indued,
The perfect monster swims the flood:
Such tales, by learned men of old
In grave and solemn lecture told,
We note but as a gage to span
The fond credulity of man:
And shew, not learning's ample prize
From folly will exempt the wise ;
And science has, howe'er she deems,
Like poetry, her waking dreams. 840

And though not oft our warmer coast
May that illustrious stranger boast,
From Iceland's frost-form'd mountains cold,
And Norway's piny crags, behold
The SPECKLED LOON ! O'er all his back
Streams of rich plumes a mantle black,
Which rows of spangles white bedeck :
Black is his head, and black his neck :
Along his throat's alternate lines
A white and black embroidery shines, 850
Save where a fillet broad around,
Oblique, of velvet black is wound.
No purer white his native snows
On Norway's virgin wastes disclose :
Nor Iceland's sables give to view
A black of deeper, richer hue.

Majestick bird ! Tho' not to him
Belong the stately strength of limb,

To skim the earth ; nor strong and swift
 The wing to mount the cloudy drift ; 860
 The Bustard's rapid pace to ply,
 Or soar on Eagle plumes the sky :
 Than his, no swifter surer foot
 O'er Ocean's buoyant breast to shoot
 With arrowy speed ; now there, now here.
 Abrupt his mazy course to steer,
 As sways the bark the guiding helm ;
 Deep in the yielding flood to whelm
 His spotted plumes, and dart away
 Impetuous for his finny prey ; 870
 Or from the depth emerge, and ride
 Triumphant o'er the stormy tide.
 Meet for the life he's form'd to lead,
 Meet for the inhabitation decreed
 To yield him refuge, food, abode,
 His parts and pow'rs has God bestow'd.
 So with his native home content,
 He roves the allotted element.
 And well are they, who duly choose,
 Each in his proper sphere, to use 880
 The parts and pow'rs by nature given,
 Subservient to the will of heaven ;
 Nor, form'd to swim the waters, try
 To pace the earth, or soar the sky !

But winter still the juice restrains
 In nature's VEGETABLE VEINS :
 And hard it were to braid a WREATH
 Of leaves and bloom from holt and heath,

From hedgerow bank and coppice bough,
To hang on January's brow.

890

Try we: and first, behold, we twine
The runners of the lithe WOODBINE,
The first of wilding race that weaves
In nature's loom its downy leaves,
And hangs in green festoons, that creep
O'er thorny brake or craggy steep,
Content to wait for May to spread
Its yellow tubes o'erlaid with red.
Alas! ere May arrive, with grief
He'll feel, now green, the blacken'd leaf,
Thrown prematurely forth to bear
The nipping frost, the blighting air.

900

And then of flow'rs the first, that shows
Its blossoms wild, the pale PRIMROSE,
With deeper tints of orange die
Irradiating its starlike eye,
Most lov'd for beauty as for smell,
From sunny slope in coppic'd dell
We'll pluck; or from the meadow's edge,
Or shelter of the hawthorn hedge,
Where, waking from unwelcome sleep,
Thro' wrinkled leaves the blossoms peep.

910

From lawn or field, from hedge or glade,
The DAISY too shall lend her aid.
Tho' scentless, and throughout the year
Her blossoms too profuse she rear
To win regard; yet passing fair
The form to those who scan with care,
And nice the structure of the flow'r:
Chief when in winter's lonely hour

920

Her golden disk she half displays,
 And tipt with pink her milkwhite rays.
 Fringing the fence or sandy wold
 With blaze of vegetable gold,
 The FURZE, (but ah, beware the thorn
 Too oft 'mid brightest blossoms born!)
 The FURZE shall yield its fragrant bloom.
 Its colour bright, and rich perfume,
 From time-dilapidated fort,
 Or ruin'd abbey's cloyster'd court, 930
 The golden WALL-FLOW'R yield. And see,
 As yet uncloth'd, the HAZEL TREE
 Prepares his early tufts to lend,
 The coppice first-fruits; and depend
 In russet drops, whose cluster'd rows,
 Still clos'd in part, in part disclose,
 Yet fenced beneath their scaly shed,
 The pendent anther's yellow head.

The wreath to garnish, all about
 The whole, meandering in and out, 940
 From woodland moist, or rugged bank,
 Or wall of antique structure dank,
 The glossy WINKLE too shall wind;
 And IVY-FOLIAG'D TOADFLAX, twin'd
 With purplish tendrils, gleaming through
 Its dark-green leaves, and blossoms blue.
 Tho' these perhaps you'll rather hold
 Last lingering reliques of the old
 And bygone year, than newly flung
 Abroad, to decorate the young. 950

The wreath's complete: for more than these,
 You'll scarce, the sight or smell to please,

Dull January's brows to bind,
 In rural nature's wild walks find:
 Unless the flow'rs you haply seek,
 Of slender form, and posture meek,
 And chaste attire, their names that owe,
 If not their whiteness, to the snow.
 Though call'd of February's race,
 Yet oft the earlier season's grace, 960
 In camp-crown'd MALVERN's lonely leas,
 Or on the rustick banks of TREES,
 In orchard, mead, or grove, 'tis said,
 Boon nature's gift, the drooping head
 They bow: more oft the gardener's care
 Repaying, deck the trim parterre,
 In form, and attitude, and dress,
 Meet types of maiden loveliness.
 And oh, may Britain's maidens prize
 The moral, which the type implies; 970
 For ever cherish'd in the breast,
 For ever on the life imprest;
 And with unsullied lustre blow,
 Pure as those imag'd DROPS of SNOW!

But while, tho' scatter'd still and scant,
 Now and again a humbler plant
 Half-waken'd shows the early strife
 Of nature struggling into life;
 Nor leaf nor flow'r as yet unfurl'd,
 The brethren of the WOODLAND WORLD 980
 Reposing lie in slumber deep:
 As if from that refreshing sleep

Their strength to renovate ; and fling,
 Reviving at the breath of spring,
 Profuse their leaves and bloom around,
 To scent the air, and clothe the ground.

Is there, the naked wood who deems
 A dead blank prospect ? Yet mescems,
 'Tis but a dull incurious eye,
 Which on the vast variety

990

Can cast a casual glance, and sees
 No interest in the wintry trees.
 And 'tis an inconsiderate mind,
 To nature's works and wonders blind,
 Which scans the brethren of the glade,
 Tho' of their vesture disarray'd,
 And there discerns not sign on sign
 Of heavenly wisdom, pow'r divine !

Tho' grander, lovelier to behold,
 When they their vernal leaves unfold,
 Or branch, bough, stem have thick array'd
 With vesture deep of summer shade .

1000

'Tis pleasing now at will to pore
 On each uncover'd form ; explore,
 How each with head aspiring grows,
 How each his arms expansive throws ;
 Mark bough, and branch, and tinted stem,
 The pointed spray, the swelling gem :
 And muse on that mysterious Pow'r,
 Which day by day, and hour by hour,
 In the dark covert, where he lurks
 Unseen, with skill incessant works,
 The dark deep places of the earth ;
 Till starts to life the curious birth,

1010

And daily, hourly to the sight
More clear displays his plastick might.

See the vast OAK, with giant head,
And strong and gnarled arms outspread!
From branches thick and interwin'd,
The yellow spray of smoother rind 1020
Last year he shot abroad; and now.
The summit of each harden'd bough,
Each knot, and swelling joint bestuds
With cluster'd bunch of yellow buds
Promiscuous; as by chance might seem,
If aught arrang'd by chance we deem
Of nature's works; but truly meant
With forethought deep, and wise intent,
To give the venerable tree
His own appropriate dignity, 1030
His twisted limbs' extended length,
His sinewy joints, his massive strength.

Its buds on either side oppos'd
In couples each to each, enclos'd
In caskets black and hard as jet,
The ASH-TREE's graceful branch beset;
The branch, which, cloth'd in modest grey,
Sweeps gracefully with easy sway,
And still in after life preserves
The bending of its infant curves. 1040

Where wide, not quite dismantled, reach
The branches of the o'erhanging BEECH,
Alternate on the limber twigs
Elongate, sharp, the turgid sprigs
In zigzag course ascend; and crown
The tender rind of polish'd brown

With purplish cones, close-wrapt beneath,
 Fold within fold, a scaly sheath;
 Which stripp'd, e'en now within is seen
 The branch of tooth-edg'd leafits green, 1050
 All but in size the branch complete,
 Which April's genial warmth shall greet.

These, and unnumber'd more, each tree
 Of vale or upland, grove or lea,
 Which, 'mid its last year's ruins bare,
 Shows buds of future promise fair:
 Of circuit wide, and stature tall,
 The ELM, that sprouts with germins small,
 Alternate, still but dimly seen
 Up the young twig of grey and green; 1060
 The freshness of whose native tints
 Time not as yet with stamp imprints
 Of vegetable rust, nor mars
 Its smoothness with deep furrow'd scars:—
 HORSE-CHESTNUT, foremost of the wood
 To dare his lengthening gems protrude,
 Dark, clammy, hard; prepar'd the first
 To hear th' enlivening call; and burst,
 With foliage cleft, and spiral bloom,
 The cearments of that living tomb:— 1070
 The branching SYCAMORE, that veils
 His folded shoots in dark green scales;
 While still, as on the fabrick goes,
 Each pair, to each succeeding, shows
 Its produce in a transverse line,
 That step by step they all combine
 To frame, by constant interchange,
 Of crosslike forms a gradual range:—

The taper LIME's compacted head,
 With twigs and buds of coral red:— 1080
 The MOUNTAIN-ASH erect, that rears
 His shafts, a plump of bristling spears,
 That shake and rattle in the gale:—
 With bending sweep, the POPLAR pale
 Of shapely form, and graceful mien:
 And WILLOWS, with their trunk of green,
 Whose branches of bright orange dye
 With tints of brighter crimson vie:—
 The BIRCH, with spray of russet dark,
 In contrast with his silvery bark, 1090
 Save where peel'd off the silver shows
 The duskier coat in circling rows:—
 With pendants loose the ALDER hung,
 The cradles of his leaves among,
 Of catkins yet unclos'd, which throw
 O'er all the tree a purple glow:—
 They're curious all! 'Tho' oft they lie
 Unnotic'd by the saunterer's eye,
 And squeamish taste perchance may deem
 They're little meet for poet's theme; 1100
 They're curious all! In shape and size
 Distinct; in station, order, dies;
 But form'd alike by unseen cause
 To execute the unvarying laws
 On each of old imprest, and still
 Give proof of one o'erruling will;
 Alike within its native mould
 All their allotted charge infold;
 All by mysterious means bestow
 The nurture, whence their charge may grow; 1110

All at the season's fulness bare
 The embryo leaf to spring-tide's air,
 And clothe the woodland's deepening scene
 With varied tints of tender green :
 Each leaf to its appropriate kind
 In shape and varying tint confined,
 As now each swelling bud we see
 Peculiar to its parent tree.

What secret CAUSE, what ruling WILL,
 By some unceasing impulse still 1120
 Prompts upward from the buried root
 Through the firm trunk the sprouting shoot ;
 Prepares the twig, the branch, the bough,
 Instructs them when to act and how,
 And gives each bud its station due,
 Each leaf its figure and its hue ?
 How holds the oak, the ash, the beech,
 The mode of being, which in each
 We witness ? Every tree that grows,
 How fix they, each his germs in rows 1130
 Peculiar ? How does each display
 By his own laws the sprouting spray ?
 Nor swerve his neighbour's to embrace,
 From time's first birth, from race to race ?

'Tis not in Horeb's Mount alone
 The PRESENT DEITY is shown. °
 As he, who tended there of old,
 The shepherd Seer, his father's fold,
 And saw the burning bush give sign
 Distinct of influence divine : 1140.
 In every bush, and plant, and tree,
 Whoe'er hath eyes to see, may see,

In leaf or blossom, branch or stem,
In half-form'd bud, or sprouting gem,
Signs of celestial pow'r appear,
And in his works their Cause revere.
Teems with his presence every sod,
And every hill's a MOUNT of God!

1148

FEBRUARY.

VER

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FEBRUARY.

THERE is at times a SOLEMN GLOOM,
Ere yet the lovely Spring assume
Sole empire, with the lingering cold
Content divided sway to hold ;
A sort of interreign, which throws
On all around a dull repose,
Dull, not unpleasing: when the rest
Nor rain, nor snow, nor winds molest ;
Nor aught by listening ear is heard,
Save first-fruit notes of vernal bird, 10
Alone, or with responsive call,
Or sound of tinkling waterfall.
Yet is no radiant brightness seen
To pierce the clouds' opposing skreen,
Or hazy vapour ; and illumine
The thickness of that solemn gloom.

Such is the garb, his natal morn
Oft times by FEBRUARY worn :
And such the garment that arrays
Full often his succeeding days. 20

Not but the WIND will sometimes wake
From slumber, and tumultuous shake
The season's stillness, and deform
Its face with rain or sleety storm
Severe, ungenial: not but oft
From his meridian throne aloft

The SUN with radiant face will smile
Of cloudless lustre ; or awhile
Through clouds, in part dismember'd, show
A transient glance, and partial throw 30
Bright lights, with many a mingled mass
Of dark broad shade, o'er yon smooth glass
Of brimming waves, yon mountain's breast,
And this fair landscape ; or invest
The cloudy pile with golden gleams,
As rolling, wreath on wreath, it seems
Like that WHITE MOUNT, which soaring high
O'er the brown rocks of MEILLERY,
And thy blue lake, GENEVA, shows
His crown of everlasting snows. 49

Oft too, when night has mantled o'er
Lawn, pasture, tilth, with vesture hoar
Of dew-born FROSTWORK ; if his beams
Pour round the sky in rosy streams,
Soon is that vesture hoar withdrawn
From pasture, tilth, and level lawn ;
And nought remains to tell the tale,
Save where not yet his rays prevail,
White stripes the inclosure's crisped edge
Define ; and on the sparkling sedge 50
By filmy pond, or grassy stem,
Hangs trembling many a liquid gem.

But shine or not the glorious sun,
Mid his bright rays, or thro' the dun
Calm shadow of that solemn gloom,
Tis pleasant to enlarge the room

Of speculation's grateful task :
And, as from nature's face the mask
Is more and more remov'd, the sight
That cover'd of her features bright ; 60
Still more and more from covert free
Of that delightful face to see,
And haply more to rove afield ;
But still, by strong attraction held,
With ready step, where'er we roam,
Returning to our pleasant home.

HOME! 'Tis a word of magick sound :
Comprising in its ample round
More bliss, than in this state below
Aught else of human can bestow ! 70
Compos'd of innocent delights ;
The useful days, the tranquil nights ;
The pleasure, from within that flows,
Nor need of strange excitement knows,
Nor with o'er-powering zest annoys,
Nor with o'er-satiate fulness cloy ;
The time that flies with downy pace,
So swift, so soft, nor leaves a trace
To mark the stages left behind ;
The interchange of mind with mind 80
In friendliest converse, and the ties
Of the heart's dearest sympathies.

But lives there not within the heart,
From that more holy love apart
Which knits us to our friends and race,
A sense of FONDNESS for the PLACE,

Where we our bygone days have dwelt?
 Is not such sense of fondness felt,
 Not by the human kind alone,
 But wide o'er living creatures sown? 90
 Nor to domestick flocks and herds
 Confin'd, but spreading to the birds,
 Which, free as air far-off to rove,
 Yet harbour in the place they love?

If not, then wherefore do we hear
 That THROSTLE's daily warble clear,
 Perch'd on the wonted beechen tree,
 As if he ne'er, could weary be
 Or of his sojourn, or his song?
 And why, our daily walk along, 100
 Hear we the whistling BLACKBIRD rush
 Forth from the custom'd laurel bush?
 Why from that wall or arbute spray
 Does ROBIN sing his daily lay,
 Content and anxious to maintain
 The limits of his little reign,
 Nor fain to share another's throne,
 Nor to another yield his own?

Yes, so it is. PLACE has a charm
 To pleasure them: and as from harm 110
 Exempt, and care, the livelong day
 They pass rejoicing, thus they say
 To restless spirits, "Wherefore roam
 Abroad for pleasure? Seek at home
 The lingerer; and with us confess
 Home is the abode of happiness!"

But if, by nature's feelings fraught,
Or use, a second nature, taught,
The birds the kindly influence prove
Of place ; another mightier love 120
Awaits them : now the advancing year
Moves onward in its due career
Another step ; and swelling buds
Thro' February's fields and woods
Begin, tho' slowly, to expand,
And tell of PAIRING TIME at hand.

Strange is the order, and combines
With numberless conspicuous signs,
Proofs of the vast directing mind,
To show what LINKS together bind 130
The works of nature, and sustain
The whole by one pervading CHAIN.

'Tis passing wonderful to see
The budding, sprouting, leaf-clad tree.
'Tis passing wonderful to trace
The progress of the feather'd race ;
The nest ; the egg ; at length indued
With life and strength, the full-fledg'd brood.
But doubly wondrous is the thought
Of signs like these together brought, 140
Each in one chain a separate link :
'Tis doubly wonderful to think,
That the same genial breath, which wakes
To being new the woods and brakes,
Should wake the flame, that lay supprest
And slumbering in the feather'd breast :

That the same hand, the woodland scene
 Which mantles with its leafy skreen,
 Should for his plum'd creation form
 That skreen a shelter close and warm, 150
 And lodge therein reviving food
 Exhaustless for the future brood.

It was a dream of fancy old,
 The dream Dan CHAUCER'S rhymes have told,
 How things that be, of every kind,
 In pairs created were, and join'd,
 "By even number of accord:"
 Whence "Vicar of the Almighty Lord,"
 O'erruling Nature gave the sign
 Each day of good SAINT VALENTINE, 160
 For every bird, that wings the air,
 To choose his make; and every pair
 Together then to speed away,
 And her controlling laws obey.

The fable still its hold maintains
 With rural England's cottage swains.
 And still, as still returns the day
 Of good SAINT VALENTINE, they say
 The little birds their partners take;
 And each, with its selected make, 170
 Begins their annual course prepare
 Of household joys, and household care.

What with the tenants of the groves,
 Their joys and cares, their homes and loves,
 Has good Saint Valentine to do;
 And whence the pleasing fiction grew;

And when, and where, and how began
The tales, which with that holy man,
Who fought till death the Christian fight,
Those feather'd choristers unite ; 180
I skill not: and in sober sooth
But little know they of the truth,
Who with a keener vision pore
On tales of legendary lore.
But the good Saint whate'er befall,
'Tis no unpleasing thought that all
The feather'd kind to NATURE'S voice
Obedient listen, and rejoice
Together, sprightly all and gay,
On that their general wedding-day. 190

Yes: 'tis a pleasing kindly thought!
And, tho' from fiction's region brought,
(For deem we not 'tis Nature's aim
Her works with such design to frame
Correlative, that each must own
Its stated counterpart alone ;
Nor that the selfsame day must bind
In wedlock all the feather'd kind :)
The thought no less from nature's law
May seem its origin to draw ; 200
Based on that high CREATIVE WILL,
Which with profound unfailing skill,
And wisdom passing human eye
The secrets of its depths to try,
Each sex in numbers wellnigh even
To every different kind has given ;
And prompts full many a plumed breast
About the sainted Martyr's feast,

If not the selfsame day, to woo
His future consort, and pursue 210
The sweet solitudes that wait
The nuptial and parental state.

For now how beats, with love[•] imprest,
Each little bird's impassion'd breast!
What ARTS, what BLANDISHMENTS he tries,
For favour in his lov'd one's eyes!
How does he strut, and flutter round,
And beat with quivering wing the ground;
And now recede, and now advance,
With courteous chirp, and ogling glance; 220
Now prune his painted feathers sleek
With comb-like claw, and oily beak;
Now, if she fly from place to place,
Pursue her in the amorous chase;
And sidling up with loaded bill
Proffer sweet morsels; and with skill
Love-tutor'd, perch'd on neighbouring tree
Pour forth his soul in harmony:
Now higher still, and still more high,
Unlocking all the tones that lie 230
Imprison'd in his tuneful throat;
And now, with softer, sweeter note,
Warbling, as if "with Lydian measures"
He sought to "soothe her soul to pleasures"
Then if a RIVAL venture by,
How does his alter'd voice defy
The intruder rash, with hostile tone,
Loud, ardent, fierce! nor voice alone,

But bitter deeds of fell despight,
 And blows, and wounds, and mortal fight! 240
 Ah! who would think such passions fell
 Within such lovely forms could dwell,
 And to such notes discordant move
 The voice so lately tun'd to love?
 But 'tis the weakness of their kind:
 And love, which prompts each little mind
 Affection's fondest signs to show
 To those they love, on rival foe
 Prompts them no less the wrong to wreak,
 With talon bent, and pointed beak; 250
 Their wrath by every vent to spend,
 Their wish to gain, and gain'd defend.

Yes! 'tis a grateful sight to see
 "Birds in their little nests agree:"
 And grateful is the sound to hear
 Their lively chirp, their warble clear,
 Unprompted, unconstrain'd by art,
 Spontaneous from the swelling heart!
 But birds, like other things of earth,
 Give symptoms of terrestrial birth: 260
 And join with all that breathe to show,
 That nought is perfect here below;
 And, who would taste unmingled love,
 Must quaff it from its Fount above.

But these harsh bickerings pass we o'er,
 The FUTURE DWELLING to explore
 In hedge, or copse, or hollow glen;
 What time at length the yielding hen,

Lured by the favour'd suitor's voice,
Or mien, or courteous acts, her choice 270
Has made ; and with her troth-plight spouse
Threads the close covert of the boughs,
Or careful marks the tangled hedge,
Or on slope bank the shelter'd ledge,
Or cavern'd nook, or blooming spray,
The fortunes of their house to lay.
For copse, or nook, or bank, or brake,
All their appropriate homestead make,
As from the birth day of the race
ALL-GUIDING NATURE shows the place, 280
And prompts each dwelling to prepare,
And teaches when, and how, and where.
No project of inventive will,
Nor fruit of imitative skill,
Attent with heedful care to view,
And, what is done by others, do
Observant : but at first imprest
By God on every plumed breast,
What time he form'd, and gave to fly
Throughout the wide expanded sky 290
The fowls, and bade each feather'd birth
"Increase and multiply" on earth !
He gave the law ; and taught the way
Withal his precept to obey ;
Taught' them the season when to wed,
And where to hang, "the procreant bed,"
And with nice touch and just design
The art-defying fabrick twine.

The first of nuptial bonds the care,
At least among the first, to share, 300
"The OUZEL-COCK, so black of hue,
With orange tawny bill*," who flew
About the lawn each morning grey,
And pick'd his food for many a day
Alone, now hopping side by side
Devotes him to his dusky bride:
Anon the o'erarching boughs between
Of some selected evergreen,
Of laurel thick, or branching fir,
Or bed of pleasant lavender, 310
To lodge secure their pendant home;
A well-wove frame, with moisten'd loam
Within cemented, and without
Rough, but compactly all about
With moss and fibrous roots intwin'd,
And wither'd bent-grass softly lin'd,
Where may repose in season due
Their pregnant balls of chalky blue,
Besprent about the flatten'd crown
With pallid spots of chestnut brown. 320

Nor less to hold in season due
Her spotted eggs of chalky blue,
Or in the thorn or holly bush,
Or hedge, or furzy brake, the THRUSH
Her twig and moss-inwoven nest
Shall fashion; and with plastick breast,
And bill with native moisture fraught,
Smooth the thin coat, from stable sought

Or stall, with rounded form to line
The cup-like fabrick's plaited twine. 330
The mystick voice, that bids her build,
Or ere the sprouted foliage shield
Her dwelling from the biting air,
Bids her no less her home prepare
Impervious to the impending storm,
A chinkless mansion, close and warm.
Nor he, who now impatient wooes
Her love, shall he the meed refuse
Assistant of connubial aid :

And, perching on the half-form'd shade 340
Of April's fresh and tender spray,
Shall cheer her with his mellow lay.

They too, of kindred stock, who claim,
The MISSEL-BIRDS, the thrushes name,
Their matrimonial league complete,
Anon shall seek their favourite seat
Or in the orchard or the wold :
To grasp the nest a forked hold,
Where, parted from the parent stem,
Apple or pine, the branching limb 350
Shows its rough bark, and o'er it stray
The pale green moss, and lichens grey.
Wove with the nest, a mingled mass
Of earth, and twigs, and twisted grass,
But all with prudent choice arrang'd,
Compact, and duly interchang'd,
Soon shall those lichens grey be seen,
And mossy sprigs of whitish green ;
Or, failing such, of fibrous roots,
And the young larch's limber shoots, 360

And thatch-like straw, a wicker drain,
 With refuse of the keen-edg'd plane,
 A drip-stone, whence, the nest beside,
 The drops of trickling rain may glide.

Well may you mark with curious eyes,
 And pay the search with pleas'd surprise,
 What signs unite, what signs divide,
 These BIRDS CONGENEROUS; allied,
 But differing still, their kinds among,
 In make, and hue, and pow'r of song, 370
 And place of revelry and rest,
 And weaving of each curious nest!
 And so 'tis strange, 'tis passing strange,
 And wonderful, throughout the range
 Of nature's varied works to see,
 What likeness, what diversity,
 In all her cognate tribes is shown:
 All by their marks *peculiar* known;
 Possessing all some *common* grace,
 As brethren of a kindred race. 380
 Mysterious law! which thus defines
 The old hereditary lines,
 That part the kindred sorts, or bind
 Together in one general kind:
 That all the signs primeval show
 Of general likeness; none can go
 A step those primal signs beyond:
 Each *special* mark, the *common* bond,
 Fruits of the same unerring skill,
 And order'd by the same high will! 390

On grassy mead or stubble field
The SKY-LARK now begins to build,
Low on the ridg'd and hollow ground,
Of leaves and speargrass loosely wound
And matted twine of horses' hair,
His homely dwelling. Small the care
It seems to boast; but well the place
Select, and habits of the race,
That thatch'd and sloping fabrick fits:
Where thro' the storm the female sits, 400
And aids with outspread plumes to throw
The rain-drops from her charge below.

Few choose their nursling's *place of rest*
So lowly as the Sky-lark's nest:
None seek to reach the Sky-lark's height,
So steep, so far, so long a *flight*.
See, how he spreads his quivering wings;
And sweeping round in spiral rings,
Now rising, rising, rising still,
Mounts upward, while his raptures thrill 410
The sky with gladness! See him there,
While hovering in the liquid air,
Self-balance'd o'er his nest he floats,
And chaunts his lively, joyous notes,
Concluding never, still beginning,
The ear to mute attention winning.
As easily the livelong hour
Pois'd on his high aerial tower,
As from the thrush the warbles flow
Perch'd on his budding tree below. 420
Thence down, and down, and down again,
With yet unspent, unwearied strain,

He sinks: till near his consort's nest,
A moment, and his wings are prest
Close to his sides; the warble stops;
And stone-like by her side he drops.

But, mark! while warbling yet on high,
Why, in the twinkling of an eye,
Is oft the song of rapture mute
At once? at once the pinions shut? 430
At once his steep and soaring flight
Ceas'd? till with slanting wing he light
Aloof, and thence with beating breast
Creep cowering to his lowly nest?

'Tis his keen sense, tho' far away,
The approach, wide prowling for his prey,
Of beak'd and talon'd HAWK has caught,
Or gliding KITE; and, quick as thought,
Down drops he! But, alas, I fear,
Destruction has already here 440
Been busy. Lo! that clotted mass
Of feathers on the blood-red grass,
Cast recklessly yon tree beneath,
Tells a sad tale of spoil and death!

His eyry now the clamorous Rook,
Who in th' autumnal months forsook,
For brake or forest's wider realm,
His native grove of oak or elm,
Revisits. Lo, not here and there
Disperst, a solitary pair; 450
But thick, and clustering like a swarm
Of bees, their residence to form,

The commonwealth collected crowd,
Tumultuous, wild, loquacious, loud.

Tho' oft the groves of elm-trees tall
They haunt, that flank some antique hall,
Or cast their solemn shade around
Some village churchyard's hallow'd ground,
Retir'd, as if to them were sweet

The stillness of such lone retreat: 460

Yet oft, no less, mid *towered town*,
Some lofty range they make their own,
Uninjur'd; where the quenchless noise
Of jocund task-remitted boys,
Well pleas'd, or busy hum of men,
They hear, and back return agen,
With caw, and croak, and stunning cry
From all their wild democracy.

Nor have there wanted some, 'tis said,
Who fix'd at times their procreant bed 470

In populous city, fain to dwell
On star-ypointing pinnacle,
Or tapering spire of holy fane,
And nestle on the changeful vane.

But rarer such: the *planted grove*
More apt their freewill choice to prove.
There when first spring their fervour wakes,
And calls them from the woods and brakes,
Both young and old the accustom'd trees

Eye with nice care sagacious: *these* 480

The ruins of the former year
Afresh to garnish: *those* to rear
On branch of wise selection, scann'd
With prudent thought mature, and plann'd

By rule and gage to nature true,
 The fabrick of their mansions new:
 Of twig-form'd framework, close and strong,
 "Clench'd overthwart and endèlong*,"
 Like Mars's adamantine door,
 Renown'd in knightly tale of yore, 490
 Tho' not "of iron tough," of root
 More meet the use design'd to suit;
 "Close," to protect from piercing air,
 And "strong," the rocking blasts to bear.

From tree to tree the fabricks grow;
 From bough to bough, above, below,
 Its post the aspiring town maintains,
 Stage above stage: so strongly reigns
 The love implanted in their breasts,
 In league their congregated nests 500
 To build, and, tho' not void of strife,
 Confederate lead a social life.

Thus the same branch, they held of old,
 Each ancient pair now claims to hold
 Of right, by all the experienc'd crowd
 Of seniors as of right allow'd.
 But if a pair, not duly school'd,
 Nor by the common charter rul'd,
 Nor by respect for age controll'd,
 Presumptuous, forward, rash, and bold; 510
 A junior pair, for youth, it seems,
 Oft of its proper state misdeems;
 If such a pair presume to seize
 A station on the well-known trees,

* Chaucer; *Knights Tale*, v. 1903.

Before appropriate ; or perchance
Too near the sacred bound advance
Of old propriety ; or dare
Unduly sought materials bear :
How shall they soon the deed bemoan !
Not by the injur'd pair alone
Pursued, but by a general throng
Combin'd by sentence just the wrong
To punish, and the right defend
Legitimate, and picemeal rend
The rash invader's work design'd,
And cast it to the scattering wind.

520

It seems a feeling undefin'd
Of natural justice prompts their mind,
To give the rightful sufferer aid,
Th' intruder punish. And 'tis said,
If by mischance or ruthless wound
Distrest, a brother bird be found,
Griev'd at his grief, with cheering cry
And wing advancing on, they try
To guide him to their airy height,
And help to take the homeward flight.
And sure it soothes the mind to think,
They, whom the laws of nature link
In being, thus with kindly heart
Each with his fellows bear a part.
A rule of love, howe'er imprest
On them, not always learn'd, at least
Not always kept, by those, who boast
In nature's scale a loftier post !

530

540

But, ah ! where one confederate race
Has fix'd their wonted dwelling place,

Let no presumptuous *strangers* dare
Attempt intrusively to share
Their fortunes, lest disastrous flight
And death the misplaced trust requite. 550
Nor where the Rooks have set their rest,
Let the tall HERONS seek their nest
To settle, lest they lead the way
To dire debate, and mortal fray:
Till these or those the mastery yield
Disabled of the foughten field.
Ah! fruitless then become the cares,
Which now attend the nuptial pairs:
The male's endearments fain to wait
With food upon his cherish'd mate, 560
Like parent on his tender brood;
The female's fond return, the food
Accepting, which her partner brings,
With trembling voice and fluttering wings!

Nor less disastrous is their lot,
If near the old accustom'd spot,
Alike to household cares address,
The RAVEN plant his early nest.

Ill-omen'd bird! with mind intent
On spoil, and thoughts on slaughter bent, 570
Thence oft he'll sally for his prey,
The rook's young nestlings; and away
Bear them triumphant off, for food
To glut his own voracious brood.

Ill-omen'd bird! Nay rather speed
Far, far away, thy young to breed

In some secluded silent wood ;
 Or in some cavern'd solitude,
 That beetles o'er the sullen deep ;
 Or ruin'd castle's ivied steep ! 580
 There from thy old coeval oak
 Toll forth thy melancholy croak !
 There, issuing from thy ghostly haunt,
 On gloomy wing the traveller daunt !
 Or from thy cyry in the sky
 Look down with keen and piercing eye,
 And mark thy destin'd carrion food,
 Or scent afar the smell of blood !
 But here thy ravages forbear,
 And our innocuous neighbours spare ! 590

Farewell ! Tho' all thy worth allow,
 Tenacious of the NUPTIAL VOW ;
 Fain with perennial zeal to share
 Thy glossy make's regards and care,
 To feed her with thy gather'd spoil,
 Or ease her from the brooding toil :—
 Farewell ! tho' deep with LOVE imbued
 So constant for thy *future brood*,
 That, while thy nesting place around
 The wood re-echoed to the sound 600
 Of saw, and wedge, and driving mall,
 And the tree nodded to its fall ;
 Still did the dam refuse to quit
 Her nest and future young, and sit
 Undaunted, till with sweepy sway
 Of trunk, and branch, and branching spray

Down, down the forest-monarch rush'd,
 And dam, nest, young together crush'd*:
 What tho' our kindly feelings move
 Thy nuptial and parental love, 610
 Farewell! we would not fain espy
 Thy wicker nest our dwelling nigh,
 Nor hear thy ill-foreboding tone;
 Lest not the rookery alone
 Unpeopled cease its sportive cries;
 But for his youngling's ravag'd eyes.
 What time he tells his daily tale,
 The disappointed shepherd wail;
 And her plum'd flock the housewife mourn,
 To thy unsparing plunder lorn! 620

Yet fail we not meanwhile to draw
 Instruction from the BOUNTIFUL LAW,
 Which rules thy being. 'Tho' thou know
 Nor time the fruitful seed to "sow;"
 Nor time the golden crop to "reap,"
 And "store the barn's" o'erflowing heap†;
 Yet dost thou find prepar'd thy food
 Ev'n in the desert's solitude:
 For He, who made thee, hears thy cries,
 Thy wish regards, thy want supplies. 630
 Alas! what feeble faith is our's!
 Who, blest with reasonable powers,
 The speaking voice, the conscious heart,
 The soul that grasps, from sense apart,
 Heaven's glories in its boundless scope,
 And, most of all, the heavenly hope;

* See White's *Selborne*, Letter II., to Mr. Pennant.

† Luke xii. 24.

Raise not to Him the fervent pray'r,
 Nor thank his providential care,
 Nor trust in Him, who gives us all,
 And listens to the raven's call*!

640

Now with his mate the PARTRIDGE pairs;
 Tho' not, as yet, the pleasing cares
 And toils of progeny they know.
 Hard is their dwelling place; and low
 Their nest 'mid tangled grass is found
 Constructed on the hollow'd ground,
 Materials rude, with slender art
 Arrang'd: but their's the better part
 With care combin'd the tender brood
 To hatch, to rear, to call, with food 650
 To nourish from the ant-hills nigh.
 And often with distressful cry,
 And limping gait that feigns a wound,
 And shivering wings, along the ground
 They run by ways diverging; so
 To puzzle, if injurious foe
 Their unprotected home molest,
 And lead him from their nursling's nest.
 Sure 'tis a voice divine, that dwells
 Within, and prompts the thought, and tells 660
 Their course by some mysterious sign:
 And sure to us that voice divine
 Speaks, and by such example draws
 To follow its recorded laws;
 Bids us the partridge' zeal approve,
 And copy their parental love.

* Job xxxviii. 41; Ps. cxlvii. 9.

But hark! where'er abroad you come,
 Each throat, untun'd crewhile and dumb,
 With song, the bosom's joy that tells,
 The many mingled concert swells. 670

Of scarlet front and golden wing
 The FINCH now makes the orchard ring
 With his sweet melody: a note
 Sounds from the BUNTING's citron throat
 Less tuneful by the hedgerow way.
 Sequester'd 'mid the budding spray
 The BLUE-CAP chirps: and sharp and harsh
 His BROTHER from the willow'd MARSH.
 From water'd mead, or streamlet's side,
 More softly sings the WAGTAIL PIED. 680
 'Mid the gray flints, on breezy hill
 Or sheep-fed heath the clamour shrill,
 While his dim form eludes the view,
 Sounds distant of the STONE-CURLEW.
 Along the green wheat's sprouting rows
 The stately PHEASANT struts; or crows
 In thicket hid; or sudden springs,
 And with his loud and whirring wings
 Startles unseen the awaken'd car
 Of careless wanderer pacing near. 690
 Within the yet unmantled grove,
 Reciting vows of faithful love,
 With changeful plumes, and plaintive coo,
 Their mates the glossy RING-DOVES woo,
 And sinking low, or rising high,
 Alternate fan the buxom sky.
 There the BROWN OWL begins to hoot:
 And he, the bird of olive suit,

With front of black and crimson gay,
 And yellow rump, the POPPINJAY 700
 With sharp strokes of his orange bill,
 And cry of "yaffle, yaffle," shrill,
 Makes the far-echoing wood resound.
 And sweetest WOODLARK, round and round
 Wide wheeling, on his circling flight,●
 Or pendent from his airy height,
 Or perch'd upon the forest tree,
 In fullest tide of minstrelsy
 To her, who sits the grass among,
 Pours forth his morning, evening song. 710

As, instinct-led, each various race
 Finds its peculiar dwelling-place,
 The difference much of site and clime;
 And much the accidents of time,
 As vernal gales and cheering rays
 Speed more or less the genial days;
 Still varying in its annual round,
 The *date* of each recurring *sound*
 Affect. But mostly sounds like these
 The ear of February please, 720
 Where health with rural pleasure roves
 Thy chalky hills and beechen groves,
 My native HAMPSHIRE! Such the notes,
 Which from thy feather'd songsters' throats
 Were heard by him, among the best
 Of nature's chroniclers confest;
 What time thro' every hollow lane
 Of his lov'd SELBORNE's rustick reign,
 By rushy pool, and living well,
 Thro' dingle, brake, and bosky dell, 730

* O'er cavern'd hill, and hanging wood,
 Her course unwearied he pursued
 Year after year with heedful ken ;
 And mark'd with his recording pen
 Each feature in the annual range,
 Of wonted use, or new and strange.

And he, whoe'er the charms would know,
 Which nature's varied features show,
 Pleas'd with each native sound and sight,
 Like thee, her own delightful *WUIRE*, 740
 To visit her abodes must choose :
 Nor studious of repose, refuse
 On breezy down, or winding coombe,
 Or in the woodland thicket's gloom,
 By brook or stream, on meadow pied,
 Or on the heathery mountain's side,
 To woo her sweet society ;
 Nor be content to hear and see
 With *others'* eyes and ears alone,
 But mark and ponder with *his own* ! 750

What countless scenes evade the sense,
 Which, scann'd with due intelligence,
 For ceaseless observation yield
 A pleasing, an instructive field !
 What nice, what universal care
 O'er spots, that barren seem and bare,
 Of nature's varied sphere extends
 Its influence ! Yet how often sends
 The eye its casual glance around,
 And deems that all is lifeless ground, 760

Which still with active force is rife,
And teems with vegetable life!

Look round! while winter's lingering power
(Checks the coy spring, no pleasant flower
May seem to animate the view.
But look again! the glance renew
With more discriminating eyes,
You'll see with pleasure and surprise
With liveliness and beauty spread,
What lifeless seem'd, and dull, and dead! 770

On upland hill; in lowland vale;
And where the frigid vapours sail,
Mantling the Alpine mountains hoar;
On granite rock, or boggy moor,
On peat-clad marsh, or sandy heath,
Or hillock's grassy slope; beneath
The hedgerow fence, and on the bank,
Fring'd with the plumed osier dank,
Of streamlet, pool, or waterfall;
On wave-wash'd stone, or plaster'd wall; 780
On tree of forest, or of fruit,
The bark-clad trunk, the heaving root;
Or where the spring with oozy slime
Slides trickling down the rifted lime;
Or where the gravelly pathway leads
Thro' shady woods, o'er plashy meads:
Exulting in the wintry cold,
Their cups the MOSSY TRIBES unfold;
Fring'd, and beneath a coping hid
Of filmy veil, and convex lid, 790
On many a thread-like stalk, bespread
With yellow, brown, or crimson red,

In contrast with the leaves of green,
 A velvet carpet, where the queen
 Of fairies might in triumph lie,
 And view their elvish revelry,
 Soft as the cygnet's downy plume,
 Or produce of the silk-worm's loom.

Survey them by the unaided eye :
 And, if the seeds within you lie 800
 Of love for *natural beauty* true,
 They'll shoot enliven'd at the view
 Of hair or feather-mantled stem,
 The wavy stalk, the fringed gem,
 Enveloping its chalic'd fruit ;
 So fair, so perfect, so minute,
 That bursting forth the seeds may seem
 A floating cloud of vapoury steam.

Or, by the microscopick glass
 Survey'd, you'll see how far surpass 810
 The works of Nature, in design,
 And texture delicately fine,
 And perfectness of every part,
 Each effort of mimetick art.

And deem not that for grace alone
 These beauteous plants are round us thrown.
 But rather deem them wisely spread
 A living carpet o'er the bed
 Of earth's too shallow soil, to meet
 Alternacies of cold and heat :— 820
 When, busy at the sprouting root,
 The frost would mar the juicy shoot,
 A shelter from the nipping air ;
 From heat a shelter, which might mar

The fibres, wither'd by the blaze,
 Unshielded, of the solar rays:—
 A nucleus, to collect the mould
 On barren spots uncloth'd; a hold,
 The mould unscatter'd to retain
 By blowing winds or flooding rain. 830
 And as the gardener's watchful care
 The ground, of native clothing bare,
 Indues with vegetative soil;
 And with the waste's collected spoil
 The tender plants expos'd defends:
 So the GREAT GARDENER mindful sends
 These mossy tribes, wherewith to shun
 The pinching frost, the scorching sun.

And what if some remoter lie,
 Beyond the reach of reason's eye 840
 Their scope to fathom, and produce
 More of delight perhaps than use;—
 Delight to them that look abroad
 For pleasure to the works of God,
 More than of use to them who rate
 All objects by their worldly weight:—
 They form, with millions more, a sign
 Of that all-gracious will benign,
 Which made so fair as well as good
 This pleasant earth; and not for food 850
 His Eden fram'd, but for delight
 As well of smelling and of sight.
 Yet not of that, as useless deem,
 Which can be made HIS glory's theme,
 Who form'd it; at HIS will which rose,
 Which at HIS will perpetual grows,

And joins with all in heav'n above
 And earth beneath his pow'r to prove,
 How great in all his works confest,
 In none more great than in the least! 860

Or would you haply wish to trace
 The wonders of the LICHEN race;
 Cold but congenial to their kinds
 The wintry air pervades, unbinds,
 The tubercled and warty crust,
 Which, in the summer heat adust,
 Now swoln with moisture, spreads around
 In shapes fantastick; and the ground,
 Stones, rocks, and walls, and heathy waste,
 And branching tree exhibits, cased 870
 In spots with many a shining boss,
 Or mingles with the verdant moss;
 Prank'd like "the snake's enamell'd skin,"
 Fit "weed to wrap a fairy in*;"
 With hues as manifold as glow
 Embroider'd on the heavenly bow.

Perhaps you worthless deem, and by
 Have past them with fastidious eye.
 Yet not as such esteem'd by those,
 Who mark how parent Nature throws 880
 Oft o'er the desert's rocky scene
 Her garb of vegetable green:
 First on the barren surface bare,
 Nurs'd by the fostering rain and air,

* Shakespeare, *Mids. Night's Dream*.

The LICHEN thin: a shallow base,
 Whereon the sprouting moss may place
 Its slender root, whence slowly spread,
 Of width and depth increas'd, a bed
 Is form'd to bear by just degrees
 The bushy shrubs, the branching trees. 890

Not worthless deem'd by those who note,
 How, mantled by the fostering coat
 Of moss or lichen, as below
 The warm but less enduring snow,
 The earth, else bare, with winter copes
 Unhill'd; and on the mountain slopes,
 What else might sink the tempest's spoil,
 Retains the well-compacted soil.

Not worthless deem'd by those who mark,
 How from the thick incrusted bark 900
 Of pine, or stones or mantled rock,
 The GOATHERD sees his shaggy flock
 Cull their scant meal; or on the wild
 Uncultur'd wastes how LAPLAND'S CHILD
 Collects the self-sown plants, to cheer,
 His only wealth, the good rein-deer.

And sure not worthless deem'd by thee,
 When with thy brethren of the sea,
 'Twas thine far, far, away from home
 Mid Arctic frost and storms to foam, 910
 Brave FRANKLIN! Leagu'd with storm and frost,
 Toil, pain, and care, when FAMINE crost
 And faced thee with thy little band;
 The force of her unnerving hand
 By many a direful symptom shown,
 The voice's deep sepulchral tone,

The expanded eye, the ghastly look,
The impatient thought infirm to brook
Ev'n friendship's proffer'd service kind,
The rambling tongue, the staggering mind ; 920
Then did thy God a table dress,
Deep in the snow-clad wilderness,
With LICHENS from their rocky bed,
Thy staff of life, thy daily bread :
And home return'd thee safe to show,
How, from the lowest depth of woe,
Means, if He will, most weak may tend
To generate the wish'd-for end :
How well becomes the gallant mind
Firm faith, with dauntless courage join'd, 930
And piety : how well the sense
Of His o'erruling providence,
In his celestial teaching bold,
And strengthen'd by his strength, can hold
'Gainst hopelessness successful strife,
And triumph o'er the ills of life !

But should your taste be more inclin'd
From FLOW'RS of more conspicuous kind
To seek for pastime ; tho' but scant
As yet be strewn the wilding plant, 940
Your favour'd search may some explore
To add to January's store.
The pastur'd mead or stubble field,
Or garden lightly scann'd, may yield
The first of all its numerous kind,
PROCUMBENT SPEEDWELL. See, inclin'd

On arching stalk, of bright blue die,
 And with a round and pearl-like eye
 Distinct, it shows its pendent head!
 Pluck, but be cautious lest you shed 950
 The petals of the tender flower;
 And shorten thus the little hour

At most allotted it to grace
 With transient bloom its native place!

On pastures dry or hedge-bank see,
 Where creeps the **BARREN STRAWBERRY**;
 Alternating its petals white
 With radiate points of verdure bright,
 Which, meeting in a central neck
 Of hairy fringe, its chalice deck. 960

And there the plant, which clothes the ground
 With strap-like flowers, a yellow round
 Of gold, whose leaves indented show
 Of points acute a jagged row,
 Thence call'd, if right I guess the truth,
 By Gallick name "the **LION'S TOOTH**,"
 With milk obnoxious to the taste.

And there, with whirls incircling graced,
 Of white and purple-tinted red,
 The **HARMLESS NETTLE'S** helmed head, 970
 Less apt with fragrance to delight
 The smell, than please the curious sight.

Mid barren heath the **BUTCHER'S BROOM**
 On thorn-tipt leaves its lonely bloom
 Infixes, where the central eye,
 Swoln to a purple nectary,
 Bright 'mid the greenish petals shows,
 And dark green leaf, whereon it grows.

See, as along the grove you pass,
 Thicket, or hedge, or pastur'd grass, 980
 The VERNAL PILEWORT's globe unfold
 Its star-like disk of burnish'd gold:
 Starlike in seeming form, from far
 It shines too like a glistening star.

Within the moist and shady glade
 What plant, in suit of green array'd,
 All heedless of the wintry cold,
 Inhabits? Foremost to unfold,
 Tho' half conceal'd, its bloom globose,
 Whose petals green, o'erlapp'd and close, 990
 Present each arch'd converging lip
 Embroider'd with a purple tip;
 And green its floral leaves expand,
 With fingers like a mermaid's hand?
 Full strange, and worthy to explore,
 That plant, the FETID HELLEBORE,
 Where'er in Britain's southern shades,
 Tho' rare, it decks the woodland glades,
 But most the rounded hills of chalk:
 Or where the garden's shady walk, 1000
 By culture rear'd, the hardy flower
 Skirts thro' the winter's gloomy hour,
 Fair to the eye: but ah! beware,
 Nor with rash tongue or finger dare
 Approach it, lest you late repent
 The acrid taste, or fetid scent.

In nature, and in aspect fair, .
 Congenial, still perhaps more rare,
 His BROTHER too the wintry scene,
 By title as in vesture GREEN, 1010

Adorns. But wide expanded lie
 Its flowers, nor share a purple die :
 And promptly as its leaves outspread,
 Bursts from the birth its blooming head.

On scaly stem, with cottony down
 O'erlaid, its lemon-colour'd crown,
 Which droop'd unclos'd, but now erect,
 The COLTSFOOT bright develops ; deck'd,
 Ere yet the impurpled stalk displays
 Its dark green leaves, with countless rays, . 1020
 Round countless tubes, alike in die,
 Expanded : but howe'er the eye
 Its tints may prize, no fragrant smells
 It nourishes in nectar'd cells,
 Link'd with its salutary power ;
 To rival that, its kindred flower,
 Which, wont to scent its native gales
 In fair Italia's Alpine vales,
 Now from its lilac-colour'd bloom
 Breathes o'er our walks a rich perfume. 1030

And there, with yellow nectary crown'd,
 A hollow tube erect and round,
 And yellow petals spread beneath,
 Unfolded from their dark green sheath,
 The DAFFODILS their bloom display,
 And flaunt, the gayest of the gay.
 And there, the sweetest of the sweet,
 Low lurks the modest VIOLET,
 Or white or blue : but of delight
 Most prodigal the virgin white, 1040
 Within whose dainty bosom dwells
 The quintessence of fragrant smells.

But tho', as in thy moral page
 We read, thou Verulamian sage*,
 Its breath more sweetly scents the air,
 When doubled by the gardener's care ;
 By me more priz'd is nature's child
 Amid its native woodlands wild.
 And more I love the simplest flower,
 In field, or hill, or woodland bower, 1050
 By "great creating Nature†" made ;
 Than when by man's presumptuous aid
 With artificial beauties drest,
 A handsome monster at the best.
 Whate'er of gain may thence accrue,
 If gain there be, in scent or hue ;
 Of adventitious beauty aught,
 By art's ingenious talent wrought ;
 'Tis more than balanc'd by the cost
 Of simple native beauty lost, 1060
 Some precious part, some feature fine,
 The ruin of the just design
 Exemplified in each, in all,
 By excellence symmetrical,
 By Nature's wise contrivance plann'd,
 And fashion'd by her matchless hand.
 As if the human legs were torn
 Away, the body to adorn
 With huge Briareus' hundred arms :
 Or Argus' hundred eyes their charms 1070
 Conferr'd to lend a monstrous grace
 To deck a lipless, noseless face.

* Bacon's *Essays*.† Shakespeare; *Winter's Tale*.

But cautious yet their germs protrude
 The brethren of the copse and wood.
 For flow'r or leaf: conspicuous most
 The wat'ry WILLOW's spray, embost
 With oval knobs of silky down;
 Which soon, in form of papal crown,
 Shall decorate the russet stem
 With many a golden diadem. 1080
 And he, that *weeps* the streamlet nigh,
 With leaves of green and yellow die
 Begins to hang the o'erbowering arch.
 Nor less the straight and tapering LARCH
 Puts forth, but dares not yet unclose.
 His cluster'd tassels' bright green rows.

The HAZEL too, which lately hung
 His boughs with barren blossoms, strung
 In wavy drops, on pendent rows,
 Begins his *fertile buds* disclose, 1090
 Unfolding from each scaly bed
 Its spreading tuft of crimson red.
 Regard it well! Few things invite
 More pleasingly the curious sight,
 Than those small tufts of crimson: few
 More strange, than that, in season due,
 Thence, wrapt in bearded husk, should shoot
 The nut's hard shell and kernel'd fruit.

Nor curious less the mountain YEW;
 Which, 'mid its leaves of solemn hue, 1100
 Its sulphur-colour'd *anthers* now,
 In clusters on the dark green bough,
Here, void of cup or blossom fair,
 Exhibits; and at distance *there*

Its verdant *chalices* minute,
The embryos of its scarlet fruit.

How wonderful the LAWS assign'd
To all the VEGETABLE kind !
By what mysterious pow'r imprest,
Does every plant, that opes its breast 1110
To gratulate the year's sweet prime,
And glad with fruit the autumnal time,
To bloom and ripe its season know,
And by fix'd laws of being grow ?
Why, now that many a lingering FLOWER
Awaits the later vernal hour,
Summer's or autumn's warmer glow ;
Do *these* their charms maturer show
To spring's first wooing, nor forbear
The blasts and chilling frosts to dare ? 1120
While still the unbroken bands of sleep
The forest and the coppice keep
In torpid slumber ; why do *these*,
Awak'd before their brother TREES,
Start forward on their annual race ?
Whence is it, who the cause can trace,
Why from each known appropriate root,
Or scatter'd seed, is seen to shoot
The same unerring plant ; the same
In stem, and stalk, and leaf, and frame 1130
Of parts combin'd, and beauteous hue ?
Why is the lowly SPEEDWELL *blue* ?
The STRAWBERRY *white* ? the NETTLE spread
With *yellowish white*, or *purplish red* ?

What gives the PILEWORT's *golden* sheen?
 The HELLEBORES their blossoms *green*,
 One *purple* tipp'd, the other still
Verdant throughout! the DAFNODIL,
 Why is it robed in *yellow* bright?
 The VIOLET, now in modest *white*, 1140
 Now in bright *purple*? Why do some
 Breathe on the air a rich *perfume*,
 Of joy and sweetness redolent;
 While others yield a *vapid* scent,
 Perchance *distasteful*? Why of size,
 And shape, and native properties,
Diversified? and why they dwell
 Some *here*, some *there*? while these rebel
 'Gainst *change of site*, why those display
 A kind compliance? who can say, 1150
 By what nice chymistry they breed
 The *germ*, the *seed-chest*, and the *seed*?
 Why that small *crimson tuft* should shoot,
 And form the HAZEL's *kernel'd fruit*?
 And that *green cup* should give to view
 The *scarlet berry* of the YEW?
 Whence is it neither can produce,
 Or tuft or cup, its destin'd use,
 Unless on each impregnate head
 Their *dust* those bursting *anthers*, shed? 1160
 Whence is it, wafted on the wind,
 The dust, according to its kind,
 Finds its appropriate *place*, decreed
 To lodge and fructify the seed;
 And with the appointed *offspring* swells
 The pulpy cups or harden'd shells?

Howe'er the process we pursue,
And step by step with anxious view
Explore of each the guiding laws,
The scope, and end, and moving cause: 1170
Tho' sage experience trace the course
Oft times of secondary force ;
Yet oft for each gradation fine,
And ever for the first design,
Of ignorance convict, we fall
Back on the PRIMAL CAUSE of all:
And rest on HIS CREATIVE WILL,
Who all his works with sovereign skill
Idea'd in his perfect mind ;
And each, "according to its kind," 1180
Ordain'd amid the fertile field
To spring, to bloom, its "fruit to yield,"
And "in itself its seed" to bear ;
And, as He order'd, "so they were*."

* Gen. i. 11.

M A R C H.

V F R.

ORIGIN of the name : description of the month's character.

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M A R C H.

CALL'D from the warrior god, whom he,
Proud of his fancied ancestry
That gave to rising Rome his name,
Was fain his vaunted sire to claim;
See call'd from warlike MARS appear,
Third in the annual round's career,
The MARTIAL MONTH. His sire to grace,
The founder of his realm and race,
The month, which then was mark'd the prime
And leader of the annual time, 10
The royal foundling gave to own
His father's name. But had he known,
In regions of the blustering north
What storms the month full often forth
Attendant on its passage draws;
He might have found another cause,
And from its elemental jars
Call'd the rough time the MONTH of MARS.

Such jars our heedful fathers, knew:
And thence the homely proverb grew, 20
Which mark'd its entrance fierce and wild
In contrast with its exit mild,
And told how March to greet them came
"A lion," but retir'd "a lamb."

'Tis hard in this our *fickle clime*
The symptoms of the passing time

To fix. As on the SEASON goes,
To-day no sure resemblance shows
To that which yesterday we knew,
Or haply may to-morrow view. 30
But frowns and smiles in ceaseless ring,
With smiles and frowns alternating,
Each give to each successive place,
As on a wayward beauty's face.
Nor that alone: but as the change
Continual in time's daily range
Defies the calculating thought;
So with uncertain symptoms fraught .
Successively the course appears
Of months, of seasons, and of years. 40
And who, from what he sees to-day,
Shall dare with glance prophetick say,
When twelve quick waning moons have roll'd
Their stated course, if hot or cold,
If calm or storm, if moist or dry,
Shall lord it in our changeful sky?
Unless perchance he fondly dream,
To him belongs the pow'r supreme,
Claim'd by the astronomick sage
In moral Johnson's graphick page* 50
Depicted, by his will controll'd
The weather's wavering course to hold,
The bursting show'rs abroad to throw,
And teach the sunshine where to glow.
But though our ever-varying sky
Will oft the weather-wise defy

Exact the future change to know ;
 Oft too its general state will show,
 That not impertinent or vain
 Is many an *old prophetick strain* 60
 Of sage experience : and 'tis true,
 That March will oft at first indue
 The lion's untam'd form, and pour
 Abroad the blustering tempest's roar,
 Which join'd with "April's" genial "showers,"
 May fill "May's" lap with blooming "flowers."

Howe'er it be, and wild and strange
 As seems the fickle season's change,
 As if indeed some feeble man
 Sway'd universal nature's plan 70
 Capricious ; yet in truth 'tis full
 Of wonder, to observe the RULE
 Of *goodness, providence, and power,*
 Which o'er the uncertain-seeming hour
 With ever watchful care presides ;
 The extravagance of nature guides
 Unerring to the destin'd goal ;
 And of discordant parts a whole
 Combines for beauty and for food,
 And models for creation's good. 80

If boisterous winds or driving sleet,
 If moist or dry, if cold or heat,
 As we with partial fondness deem
 Short-sighted, may at seasons seem
 Mix'd in undue uncertain rates,
 Till this or that predominates ;

How does the *adjusting hand of heaven*
 Make with nice touch the balance even,
 That none injuriously prevail,
 Be conquer'd none! How rarely fail, 90
 Once buried in the furrow'd row,
 The seeds with sprouting blade to grow,
 With verdant ear the tilth adorn,
 And ripening wave the golden corn!

But what if seasons more unkind,
 Of drenching flood or parching wind,
 Now and again the tender seed
 Disable; and the springtide breed
 Less copiously the ear-form'd grain
 To gladden summer's harvest reign: 100
 What is it but a proof, that HE,
 Who with a word bade nature be,
 Still shapes and models at his will
 Her ways, and bids creation still
 Submissive to his sceptre bow,
 And act what he commands and how?
 Of nature, and of nature's laws,
 Speak as we please, as of the cause
 Primordial of the vaulted scene
 And all that tenant it; a queen 110
 Intelligent, who sways alone
 Creation's monarchy and throne; .
 Nature is but a name, to show
 The course of things above, below,
 Which God's high providence fulfils;
 And nature's works are what he wills.

HE WILLS: the indurated ground,
 Lo! the congealing frost hath bound.

HE WILLS: the earth is hid below
A mantle of manuring snow. 120
HE WILLS: the windows of the sky
Again are open'd, and from high
On parent earth's prolifick bed
The clouds relaxing moisture shed.
HE WILLS: and from his viewless store
The winds with sway tumultuous pour,
And ventilate the crumbling clod:
Again HE WILLS: the expectant sod
Imbibes thro' every porous vein
The influence of the falling rain, 130
Which fatness thro' the earth distills;
And rising thence, for so HE WILLS,
By wing of vernal breezes fann'd,
And foster'd by the sunbeams bland,
Gives her to bud, and shoot, and spread,
"The sower's seed, the eater's bread*."

Forerunners by his will decreed
To harbinger the scatter'd seed,
The frost, the snow, the rain, the wind
Have done his bidding, and inclin'd 140
The earth for fruitfulness: and now
"Man goeth forth to toil†." The PLOUGH
Smooth through the upturn'd fallow glides;
And as the keel-like share divides
The surface, 'mid the furrow dun
Shows its bright polish to the sun.

* Isaiah liv. 10.

† Psalm civ. 23.

The PLOUGHMAN o'er the yielding land,
With eye intent, and steady hand,
Defines the intended path; and cheers
And guides his steeds, or patient steers, 150
With voice across the undented plain,
And shaking of the slacken'd rein.

The seed-lap o'er his shoulder slung,
Or sheet in folds capacious hung,
Behind the dextrous SOWER goes,
With measur'd step; and round him throws
With well-aim'd cast expert, that keeps
Accordance with his measur'd steps,
The harvest's promis'd wealth. At length
Harsh-grating, its unwieldy strength 160
The three-fold HARROW adds, to close
With piercing tines the ridgy rows,
And smooth, where now confided rest
Man's cherish'd hopes, earth's fertile breast.

Man's work is done. ALL BOUNTEOUS POWER!
'Tis now for thee the genial hour
To regulate; for thee to rear
The germ, the blade, the pregnant ear,
Last on the ear the full-grown grain,
Each in its kind: erect to train 170
The bristling barley, give the oat
Light on the buoyant air to float,
Abroad the winding pea to trail,
And bid the blossom'd bean exhale
Delightful fragrance! By thy care
The verdant fields already wear.
Their mantle of the sprouting wheat,
Unhurt by winter. Oh, complete

The boon! To meet perfection bring
 The promise of the opening spring! 180
 That hill and joyous vale may smile
 With fruitfulness, and man the while
 Earth's kindly fruits receiving, own
 The welcome gift is thine alone!

HAPPY, of philosophick mind
 Is he, who can by searching find,
 What *secondary causes* lurk
 Unseen by common eyes; and work
 Together, from the air and earth,
 To propagate each wondrous birth 190
 That parent nature breeds, and bring
 To perfectness the hopes of spring!
 MORE HAPPY he, who, as abroad
 He looks, throughout the PRESENT God
 Perceives in open view reveal'd:
 And whether from his mind conceal'd
 Those secondary causes lie,
 Or open to his mental eye;
 Still to their PRIMAL CAUSE returns,
 Alone uncaus'd, and thus discerns 200
 Him, of the universal whole
 The source and end, the life and soul!

Intent, whate'er before her lies
 To scan with over-curious eyes,
 The philosophick mind may err,
 From FAITH abstracted: but with her
 To guide him, he who little kens
 Of active sublunary means,

Yet in his works prepar'd to see
 God with a child's simplicity ; 210
 His is the WISDOM pure and true,
 Surpassing all that NEWTON knew,
 Had not great NEWTON, with a mind
 Of matchless scope capacious, joined
 The faith submit, the manners mild
 And humble, of a simple child ;
 Confess'd reveal'd in nature's laws
 The one, the universal Cause,
 The sovereign God: and not content
 To see him in the firmanent, 220
 And earth's material fabrick, sought
 Elsewhere his steps; the volume, fraught
 With lore still more sublime, explor'd ;
 And found him in his written word !

Now day by day, and hour by hour,
 Is felt and own'd the QUICKENING POWER.

As when the rising flood's at hand,
 To one who loiters on the strand
 'Tis pleasant by the ocean's side
 To muse, and mark the incoming tide, 230
 And count the billows of the deep
 As onward step by step they creep,
 Till one broad convex shield o'erlay
 With silver all the brimming bay :
 Ev'n so 'tis sweet, this vernal time,
 To mark the still *advancing prime*,
 How in her calm and creeping course
 Boon nature's vegetative force

Steals onward with resistless flow ;
 As promising erelong to throw 240
 A broad and bloom-embroider'd robe
 Of verdure o'er the smiling globe.

On earth no lovelier sight is seen
 Than that bloom-broider'd robe of green,
 Which hangs its fair and fresh array
 On the young form of bonny May.

And yet I know not but a sense
 More keen the previous steps dispense,
 As on the *work progressive* goes,
 Nor yet its full perfection shows. 250

Then each fresh symptom, one by one
 Appearing, as a *trophy* won
 Is treasur'd, as a special gain
 From winter's stern and gloomy reign.

Each charm that takes the ear or view,
 Not beauteous only, but as *new*,
 Makes to the admiring mind appeal ;
 And much as beauty's pow'r we feel,
 Yet novelty itself alone
 Has charms peculiarly its own. 260

Then, as successive objects rise,
 With fresh enjoyment and surprise
 Each draws the raptur'd mind to dwell
 On each *successive miracle* ;
 And, while it swells the previous store,
 Gives pledge and earnest yet of more,
 Enlarging thus the present scope
 Of pleasure with the future's *hope* :
 And hope assur'd the mind employs
 As vividly as actual joys. 270

But passing this ; for objects fair
 May less behove us to compare
 In thought with others, than from each
 The joys within our present reach
 To gather, nor meanwhile forget
 The Source of goodness, and the debt
 We owe Him ; yes, 'tis pleasant now
 To watch the first fruits of the plough ;
 And from the seed so lately sown,
 And buried in the furrows brown, 280
 Sec, while we slept, the spear-like BLADE
 The field with tender verdure shade.

'Tis pleasant on each hardy tree,
 Currant, or prickly gooseberry,
 Along the hawthorn's level line,
 Or bush of fragrant eglantine,
 Bramble, or pithy elder pale,
 Or larch, or woodbine's twisted trail,
 Or willow lithe, a FLUSH of GREEN
 To note with light transparent skreen 290
 At intervals the branches hide
 Of vegetable gauze ; till wide
 It spreads, and thickens to the eye,
 A close-wove veil of deeper die.

'Tis pleasant to contemplate how
 Grows on the yet unmantled bough
 The swelling LEAF profuse ; if vain
 Of likeness to the beauteous plane,
 The forward SYCAMORE display
 His foliage ; or the shining spray 300
 Of CHESTNUT to the sun protrude
 His lengthen'd and expanded bud

Adhesive:—to remark it first
 Its brown exterior' armour burst
 Of many a closely serried scale,
 Close as the steel-clad warrior's mail,
 And slowly thro' each loosen'd joint
 Appear with green and spiral point
 Emerging; then its braids unfold
 Plait after plait, so nicely roll'd, 310
 That once unwrapt in vain would art
 Fold it anew: till every part,
 Stalk, fibre, frame and framework, meet
 In union; and the leaf complete
 Light in the passing breezes plays,
 And twinkles in the sunny rays.

'Tis pleasant on the GROUND to pore,
 And with discerning gaze explore
 The LEAVES that mat the coppice dank,
 The pathway side, or hedgerow bank, 320
 Chequering the now prolifick mould;
 With fine mosaick, manifold
 In figure, size, and tint, inlaid,
 A carpet green by nature made,
 Ere yet of damask work she pours
 From her rich loom the blooming flowers.

And now, as nature from her loom
 Pours gradual forth each opening BLOOM,
 'Tis pleasant all the course to see
 Of that delightful mystery: 330
 To see the cloven cup display
 From its spread valves in meet array
 The tender blossom's apt design,
 And texture delicately fine,

Of virgin whiteness, or with print
 Imprest of many a rainbow tint,
 In patterns numberless dispos'd ;
 And then those petals fair unclos'd
 To sec, with threadlike stamens crown'd,
 And farinaceous anthers, round 340
 The central style ; and how they throw
 Thence to the swelling chest below
 The fertilising dust, and feed
 By pow'r unseen the future seed.

Such things are pleasant in their course,
 Innocuous, blameless ; and the source
 Of AFTER PLEASURE, when the mind,
 To scenes and days left far behind
 Recurring, finds the track remain
 Of joys, and lives its life again. 350

Ev'n now does memory wake the time,
 When wont with thee, BELOV'd, to climb,
 Though thrice ten years have past between
 With chequer'd course, and many a scene
 Quick-changing leave memorials there
 Of joyance some, and some of care ;
 Still in my memory lives the time,
 When first with thee I us'd to climb,
 As in this passing vernal hour,
 In search of every opening flow'r 360
 And with sweet nature's love imbued,
 The hazel copse, the beechen wood,
 The green and chalky hills that swell
 From BURTON's sequester'd dell.

Each well-known SPOT is vivid now,
 Each gather'd FLOW'R! On yonder brow,
 To which, the sloping hill side round,
 The greensward pathway gently wound,
 And from its flat and terrac'd height
 Spread forth before the raptur'd sight 370
 Low PETERSFIELD'S extended vale,
 The WOODLAND SORREL'S petals pale
 Vein'd with fine purple streaks we found,
 Hid in the thicket-mantled ground,
 And cropt admiring. Yonder wood
 Was with a purpled carpet strew'd
 Of yellow-tinted white and blue,
 Where in the beechen covert grew
 WIND-FLOW'R and HAREBELL, side by side,
 In station, not in kind, allied; 380
 But lovely both, nor lovelier race
 Gives the rathe Spring her blooming grace:
That upright with white petals spread,
This drooping with embowed head;
That scentless, *this* a fragrant smell
 Diffusing from each azure bell;
 Azure or white, for, though more rare,
 The milk-white HAREBELL too was there.

Skirting the hill's projecting foot,
 Where heav'd the ground the twisted root, 390
 In those tall ELM-TREES' lengthen'd row
 We paus'd to see their blossoms blow:
 And in the hanging copse, beyond
 The mirrour of that crystal pond,
 To see what seem'd a sheet of snow
 Clothe the dark branches of the SLOE,

Yet of its lingering foliage bare ;
 What time the keen and biting air
 Smote the hard earth with influence froze,
 And warn'd of winter not yet o'er, 400
 And peasants, conscious of the claim,
 Gave it the "blackthorn winter's" name.

In that broad field, 'mid springing grass,
 First of his lipt and horned class,
 The EARLY-FLOWERING ORCHIS show'd
 His smooth and spotted leaves, and glow'd
 With spikey stalk clate, and head
 Of spiral blossoms purple-red.
 And few of that most curious race,
 Or those that rival them in grace, 410
 Perhaps exceed, the OPHIRYS kind,
 But in the advancing season join'd,
 Stamp'd with their insect imagery,
 Gnat, fly, and butterfly, and bee,
 To lure us in pursuit to rove
 That winding coombe, that shady grove.

There in the hollow lane, whose sides
 The native rock o'erarching hides,
 While from its moss-grown fissures well
 The trickling drops, the MOSCHATEL 420
 Peep'd meekly from his rocky bed ;
 And scarcely dar'd his cluster'd head
 Of star-like blossoms white, with scent
 Faint, not ungrateful, redolent,
 To proffer to the searching sight.
 And there, with star-like blossoms white,
 But less afraid of publick gaze,
 The STRICHWORT spread its brighter rays ;

Where the worn pathway wont to lead
 Our steps along yon water'd mead, 130
 Laced by that clear perennial brook.
 Nor fail'd we rambling there to look
 On "PAISY pied, and VIOLET blue,"
 And creeping CROWFOOT's yellow hue,
 And that fair flow'r, "all silvery white,
 That paints the meadows with delight *:"
 To see the pallid PRIMROSE prank
 With yellow eye the tufted bank ;
 To see the flaunting MARI GOLD
 Gay from its MARSHY bed unfold 440
 Mid minor lights its disks that shine,
 Like suns for brightness. Nor decline
 The SPEEDWELL's azure tints to mark,
 And *ivy-figur'd* foliage dark,
 Which our sequestered homestead field
 And our lov'd garden walk would yield.

Yes, *pleasant* then, BELOV'D, to thee,
 And *pleasant*, well thou know'st, to me
 That garden walk, that homestead still,
 Hard by the gently sloping hill, 450
 Whence the old Church of Norman age
 Down on the ancient Parsonage
 Look'd smilingly, as if to shed
 A blessing on the pastor's head.
 And *pleasant* was the path, that wound
 Slow rising to the terrac'd mound ;
 The brook, that through the mead pursued
 Its living course ; the beechen wood,

* Shakespeare ; *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Hung on the sloping hill of chalk ;
 And copse, and elm-trees' lengthen'd walk, 460
 And rock-hewn lane, were PLEASANT ALL !
 And still the awakening FLOW'RS recall.
 Which still with no unheedful eye
 We pass each vernal season by,
 Yes, they *recall* the scenes anew,
 Where erst each pleasing form we knew,
 The scenes which backward thought endears,
 Seen thro' the gathering mist of years ;
 And with them many a vision raise
 Of nature's charms in bygone days, 470
 And pleasant rambles once our own
 In the lov'd haunts of BURTON !

Neglect, despise, deride, who will,
 The BOTANIST'S unthrifty skill !
 What though his unambitious aim
 Seek not to share LINNÆAN fame ;
 Tho' of his lov'd pursuit to sound
 The dark recesses more profound
 He boast not ; yet from flow'r to flow'r
 To ramble thro' a leisure hour, 480
 And like the honey-bee to sip
 Fresh fragrance from each nectar'd lip,
 Free nature's gift, a joy bestow,
 Which fashion's tribe nor heeds nor knows.

To nature's every varying face
 It gives each day a *novel* grace,
New wonders ; and unfolds a store
 Of *knowledge* not perceiv'd before.

To many a *healthful walk* abroad
It tempts, and many a *weary road* 490
Enlivens, cheering us along
As blithely as the pilgrim's song ;
Reveals a garden in the waste,
And shows a feast before us placed,
Which he who wills may make his own,
Himself enriching, robbing none,
From taint, or fear of ill secure,
Uncostly, blameless, peaceful, pure !
And in a world, where guilt and woe
Too oft from thoughtless pastime flow : 500
And pleasure ; purchas'd at the cost
Of health, and peace, and virtue lost,
And conscience ; with illusive dreams
Snares the weak sense : not ill meseems
Does he amusement seek to find,
Not ill employ his vacant mind,
Who fixing there no conscious sting
For hurt or harm to living thing,
At nature's common board can feed
His simple taste ; in every weed 510
As in some precious mine discern
A gem ; and see at every turn
A bow'r of bliss salute his sight,
A paradise of new delight :
Perhaps not satisfied to scan
Alone what meets the eye, the plan
And outward structure of the flower ;
But studious what its vital power
To scrutinise, and what its kind
And properties, and what, design'd 520

For man's behoof, its parts produce
Of pleasure, ornament, and use.

Chief if the mind, entic'd to stray
In pleasant nature's flowery way,
Turn not aside its bounden care
From duty's bidding, nor forbear
Its just regards from God and men,
Our proper task assign'd. And then,
If contemplation in the school,
Where nature bears imperial rule, 530
God's delegate, dispose the heart
To dwell with VIRTUE, and, apart
From worldly schemes and worldly strife,
Woo the pure JOYS of RURAL LIFE.
Then most of all, if nature bear
Up to her GREAT ARTIFICER
The heavenward thought; and in the glass
Reflective of the blooming grass,
Incline us more and more to see
Of HIM, who form'd, and bade it be, 540
And for its form a garb prepares;
And gives an earnest in his cares
For the brief plant, that he who thus
Provides for them must care for us.

Then to the soul, as to the sight,
Of learning full, as of delight,
Is nature's herbal: every flow'r,
That animates the passing hour,
Breathes on the meditative ear
A voice, that who hath ears may hear: 550
And thus they wake the solemn thought,
In words by heavenly Wisdom taught .

To heedless, faithless men below,
 "Consider, Christian, how we grow*!"

But yet does winter harsh maintain
 With gentle spring divided reign.
 Yet the more CAUTIOUS PLANTS deny
 To trust them to the tempting sky;
 While prompter some behold with grief
 The shrivell'd flow'r, the blacken'd leaf; 560
 Oft as the keen north-eastern gale
 Bears on his wings the arrowy hail,
 Or spreads, the nightly meadows o'er,
 'Congeal'd the dewy vapour hoar.
 And yet the little birds decline
 The fabrick of their nests to twine,
 Expecting April's genial hours,
 And warmer gales, and closer bowers.

But with more forward haste a few
 Commence, or erst commenc'd pursue, 570
 The task the wreathed nest to wind.
 And chief the THRUSHES' varied kind
 With him, who on the HEDGEROW CHANTS,
 Thence named, his pleasing song; and plants
 On leafless bough his lowly home.
 Poor bird! full oft 'tis his the doom
 His disappointed hopes to rue,
 What time the *eggs* of speckless blue
 With wanton glee, his earliest prey,
 The youngling peasant bears away, 580

* Matt. vi. 28.

In gay festoons of packthread strung,
 And round the trophied cottage hung.
 Poor bird! the art, so lately tried
 With more success to turn aside,
 With devious course and fluttering wing,
 The prowling cat's rapacious spring,
 To cheat the keener cowherd fails,
 More dangerous foe! Nor aught avails
 Heard more or less, the winter long,
 His soft and sweetly warbled song, 590
 Where by the cottage garden's bound,
 Or fence, the treasur'd stacks around,
 He dwells, his favourite place of rest,
 A modest inoffensive guest!

What secret, what mysterious cause
 The hedgerow's harmless chanter draws,
 Or ere the sprouting leaves have spread
 Their covert round, his nestlings' bed
 To form, with slender skill inclos'd,
 And to the spoiler's eye expos'd, 600
 'Twere hard to say. Nor does it seem
 Accordant with his bounteous scheme,
 Who makes his wise provisions tend
 Successful to their destin'd end,
 And in each living breast implants
 Perception suited to its wants.
 But if of his capacious plan
 Some parts we fail, howe'er we scan,
 To compass; it but serves to show
 How much our wisdom is below 610
 His folly! And ev'n here the sign
 Of his paternal pow'r benign,

Who for all nature cares, we trace :
 Whose foresight for each varied race,
 Howe'er molested some may feel
 Privation, yet the general weal
 From perils that its path inclose,
 From want, disease, and direr foes
 Preserves, and bids its post maintain
 In being's many folded chain. 620

Nor would I dare the forming mind
 Arraign misjudging, if I find
 Now and again his work induced
 With little, as may seem, to good
 Propense, and apter to fulfill
 Designs and purposes of ill.

Perchance the ill, that meets the sight,
 May pass our faculties aright
 To judge it ; or, if rightly view'd,
 The seeming ill may end in good. 630

That CARRION CROW so busy see !
 Intent on yonder forked tree
 His future mansion to prepare,
 Of plaster'd twigs, with wool and hair
 Imbedded. Scanty is his claim
 To please us ; and his very name
 May breed disgust, as to the sight
 It shows the insatiate appetite,
 Coarse, indistinctive. Yet 'tis hence
 His Maker wills him to dispense 640
 Man's health and comfort ; while for food
 He thins the reptile's noxious brood,

And, revelling in his putrid fare,
From taint relieves the loaded air.

And he, the loud intrusive PIE,
Who plies his quick wings screaming by,
And not content to steal a feast
Voracious from each neighbouring nest,
His plunder on the poultry's hold
Directs, and on the wattled fold, 650
Duckling, or chick, or new-fall'n lamb;
If haply from the fleecy dam,
In life's fresh joy and frolick play,
At distance heedlessly they stray:—
To his voracity we owe,
In common with his brother crow,
That from their lurking place are dug
Beetle, and grub, and noxious slug,
And safely thus with unharm'd roots
The grass and sprouting corn-blade shoots. 660
And well it is, if they who hold
His manners selfish, fraudulent, bold,
In well-deserv'd dislike, would turn
Their searching eyes at home, and learn
A lesson, and themselves disclaim
The faults, that in the PIE they blame!

But of his ways however ill
We deem and justly, yet for *sk'il*
To build his dwelling, few can vie
In talent with the artful PIE. 670

On turf-rear'd platform, intermixt
With clay and cross-laid sticks betwixt,
'Mid hawthorn, fir, or elm-tree slung,
Is piled for the expected young

A soft and neatly woven home.
 Above, of tangled thorns a dome
 Forms a sharp fence the nest about,
 To keep all rash intruders out.
 So, like a robber in his hold,
 Or some marauding baron bold 680
 On castled cliff in olden time,
 They sit unblench'd in state sublime
 And fortress intricately plann'd;
 As if they felt, that they, whose hand
 Is aim'd at others, rightly deem
 The hand of others aim'd at them.
 So there they dwell man's dwellings nigh,
 But not in man's society,
 Arabian-like: and little share
 His love, nor for his hatred care; 690
 Prompt of his rural stores a part
 To seize, and joyful if their art
 His efforts at revenge elude;
 Then to their favourite solitude
 Retiring on their fortress-tree,
 Enjoy their spoil secure and free.

What motive prompts the *pie* to dwell
 High on his barrier'd citadel,
 Fit refuge for his plunder'd prey,
 'Tis easy; 'twere more hard to say, 700
 What motive less conspicuous draws,
 As now, the congregated Daws
 In *spire*, or loop'd and window'd *tower*,
 Of hallow'd fane their nestling bower

To settle; and those airy cells
 Conventual by the pealing bells
 Hold undisturb'd, their lov'd resort;
 More lov'd, than old dismantled fort,
 Or cavern'd cliff beside the sea.
 Or hollow of the woodland tree: 710
 Or, failing that their favourite site
 On the tall steeple's cloudy height,
 What prompts them to the waste to roam,
 And seek a subterranean home,
 The *burrowing rabbit's* haunt; and there
 Of sticks and matted wool prepare
 Their dwelling, and produce their race
 In that unlikely nestling place.

There's many a page in nature's book,
 Which, little vers'd therein to look, 720
 The simplest mind may run and read:
 But not a few there are, with heed
 Observ'd by not untutor'd eyes,
 Which puzzle and perplex the wise.
 Yet all may see, how strange so e'er
 The ways of Providence appear,
 They still by various courses tend
 To generate the purpos'd end,
 And serve to keep, as they're design'd,
 In being each created kind. 730

But who with scrutinising eyes
 Would pierce thro' nature's mysteries
 For guidance of the feather'd race,
 Be his the still small voice to trace,

Which calls the INMATES of the SEA
 Now from our southern shores to flee,
 Their wintry haunts, our marshy fens
 And freshets; and on soaring pens
 Speed *northward*: there on rocks of ice,
 In cave or beetling precipice 740
 Which crests the vast NORWEGIAN deep,
 Or where the howling tempests sweep
 Round ICELAND'S crags, to rear their broods
 'Mid HYPERBOREAN solitudes;
 Where untam'd Nature all alone
 Sits empress on her giant throne,
 And listens to the clanging sound
 Of countless pinions flapping round,
 And screams that mingle with the roar
 Of billows on the desert shore. 750

Who seeks to pierce by reason's clue
 Mysterious nature's windings through,
 Be his the still small voice to trace,
 Which from their wintry dwelling place
 Beyond the MIDLAND-SEA, from lands
 Where AFRIC spreads her glowing sands.
 Or where round lone ATLANTICK isles
 Old ocean wreathes his crisped smiles,
 Calls wafted on the vernal winds
 The SMALLER MIGRATORY KINDS 760
 To summer in our temperate clime;
 Which bids them know the appointed time,
 The appointed goal which bids them know,
 And how their pathless course to go
 O'er the wide waves, and how resort
 Unerring to the appointed port.

Now ere the MARTIAL MONTH conclude
In lamb-like guise his empire rude,
But more through APRIL's month of showers,
And MAY's sweet month of blooming flowers ; 770
For cooler air perhaps, or food
Perhaps more copious, or their brood
Beneath a more congenial sky
To hatch and rear, they northward fly
Their airy course remote. The ends,
Which th' all-disposing mind intends,
We guess: but what the secret sense,
Unknown to man's intelligence,
Which prompts them when away to start,
And how, and whither ; what the chart, 780
The compass, and the guiding helm,
Which steers them o'er the wat'ry realm ;
Of this what science can explore,
And reason fathom, is no more
Than the Creator's law to know,
Who wills their going, and they go ;
And straightway to their future home
He wills their coming, and they come.

Inquiring, thoughtful, reasoning, wise
Is man: but much there is that lies 790
Beyond his utmost skill to solve
Of facts that round and round revolve
In course perpetual. And when thought
Has done its best, the knowledge sought
To render ; reason can declare
In answer but that SUCH THINGS ARE:
That such things are by His decree,
Who made and order'd them to be,

Ev'n as they are: that man may learn
 Humility, if he discern 800
 "Darkly in a glass*" the things of heaven,
 God and his nature, who hath given
 Men but imperfectly to know
 The nature of his works below.

'Tis like a dream of fairy land,
 Or waving of enchanter's wand,
 Such as Arabian fablers tell.
 To-day the little birds, that dwell
 Our island's constant inmates, reign
 Unrivall'd in their own domain: 810
 Tomorrow; and the silent night
 Will many a stranger bird his flight
 Have hither sped, with them to share
 Their haunts, their buds, their insect fare.
 And brooding cares at hand; to make
 With them the field and leafy brake
 With song of lovetaught musick ring;
 With them to prune the glossy wing
 'Mid the green boughs, or sportive fly
 Quick glancing through the sunny sky. 820

First of the migratory swarm
 His lodging in our woods to form,
 The WRYNECK comes. A lonely bird,
 Nor oft his gentle voice is heard,
 Nor oft are spread, retir'd and shy,
 His pinions in the open sky.
 Yet when occasion serves, 'tis well,
 Where in HAMPTONIAN groves they dwell,

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Or GLOUCESTER's wooded vales remote,
 Their habits and their form to note : 830
 To note the mottled plumes that grace,
 As with a robe of tissued lace
 Their russet wings ; to see them drill
 With sharp and penetrating bill
 Their cavern'd dwelling, and among
 Their insect prey the horn-tipt tongue
 Tenacious dart ; and as they pry
 Now here now there, and turn awry
 The head and spiral neck, to mark,
 How from the crown descending dark 840
 With course aslant, the listed black
 Inlays the gray and speckled back.

The *embroidery* of that vesture gray
 Nor pen nor pencil can portray :
 But still more wondrous to the mind
 Is that sharp *tip of horn*, design'd
 The pliant *length of tongue* to guide
 With constant *aim unerring* ; glide
 Resistless to the emmet's nest,
 The dark mould piercing ; there arrest, 850
 And to the expecting bill convey
 On *gluey point* the reptile prey.
 The pliant tongue's horn-pointed frame,
 The adhesive glue, the unerring aim ;
 What proofs are here of wise DESIGN,
 Of nice ADJUSTMENT, POW'R divine,
 Disclosing, what the will intends,
 By means adapted to the ends ;
 Nor failing by those means to teach
 His works the intended ends to reach ! 860

But blither forms and voices clear
Soon greet the expecting eye and ear.

Where the gray sallow's bursting do you
Is girt with many a golden crown,
Fain would I now, in rival gold
His slender form attir'd, behold
The WILLOW-HAUNTING WREN, and hear
His plaintive woodnotes warbled clear,
As on the breath of morning floats
The musick of his hymn-like notes. 870

Fain 'mid the hawthorn's budding boughs,
Or where the dark green ivy shows
Its purple fruit the foliage through,
Would I the early BLACKCAP view,
With sable cowl and amice gray
Arriv'd from regions far away,
Like palmer from some sainted shrine,
On holy hills of PALESTINE:
And hear his desultory bill
Such notes of varying cadence trill, 880
That mimick art that quaver'd strain
May strive to match, but strive in vain.

In the wild rabbits' haunt, or field,
Where the brown fallow newly till'd
The reptiles 'mid the crumbling soil
Upturns, or flies, his favourite spoil,
Fain would I see the WHEATEAR show
In the dark sward his rump of snow,
Of spotless brightness. Fain would see
O'er furze-clad waste, or grassy lea, 890
By hedgerow, pool, and streamlet's brim,
The kindred TRIBES of SWALLOWS skim

Unwearied: *that*, a cautious band,
 On heath or hollow'd banks of sand,
 From the shunn'd haunts of man aloof
 Sequester'd; *these*, beneath his roof
 'Confiding inmates: if the prime
 Tempt them in MARCH's early time
 To spread their pinions' northward sails;
 Nor sleety storms and chilling gales 900
 Till April's milder month delay
 Their voyage o'er the watry way.

And see, they come! But not I deem
 From reed-fring'd bank of pool or stream,
 As if in clusters, link on link,
 'Clinging beneath the cavern'd brink,
 Or plung'd within the waters deep,
 They slept their livelong winter's sleep,
 Intomb'd, a kind of living death;
 And now, at spring's awakening breath, 910
 Start forth with active vigour rife,
 Exulting in reviving life.

Though now and then a youngling bird,
 From the long flight perchance deterr'd
 By weakness, may have linger'd here,
 And by steep brook or rushy mere
 Reluctant hid the folded wing;
 Prompt with reviving warmth to fling
 The dull unwelcome sleep away,
 And revel in the sunny ray. 920

But different far the flocks that throng
 Now day by day the shores along.

From southern lands, o'er severing seas,
 Borne on the equinoctial breeze,

'They speed their airy flight remote ;
 When heav'n by sure and certain note
 Gives signal of the appointed time
 To sum their pens and change their clime.
 Nor reck they of the journey's length,
 By sea, by land, whose PINIONS' STRENGTH, 930
 When of their destin'd course the whole
 Is travers'd, and attain'd the goal,
 Delights th' aërial maze to weave
 The summer long, from morn to eve,
 Day still succeeding day ; with speed
 That mocks the tempest-footed steed ;
 With ease, that all that mazy way
 Is but enjoyment's idle play ;
 With vigour, heedless of repose,
 Which nor fatigue nor respite knows, 940
 As fresh o'er evening's twilight lawn,
 As at the peep of young-eyed dawn.

Though many a songster's warbled strain
 The listener's raptur'd ear inchain
 With song, and trill, and rise, and fall,
 Melodious more and musical ;
 No fairer object holds the sight,
 Than the swift flight and counter flight,
 The turns, and bends, and ceaseless spring
 Elastick, of the SWALLOW'S WING. 950

Oft have I stood in silent gaze,
 And watch'd their labyrinthine ways,
 When first, their annual voyage o'er,
 Round some selected spot they pour,
 A social band : and here and there,
 Impetuous through the darken'd air

116. DIFFICULTY OF FOLLOWING THEM WITH THE EYE.

Right on with moveless pinions glide;
 Or deviate, like the eddying tide,
 Abrupt; or wheeling round above,
 Below, with courses interwove, 960
 But each by each untangled, dart;
 As with design each untried part
 Of their adopted reign to view,
 Each nook, recess, and avenue,
 Or ere content no more to roam
 They fix them in their summer home.

Then have I sought in vain to spy
 Distinct each figure speeding by;
 And ponder'd all their curious modes
 Of being, and their lov'd abodes 970
 And mansionry; the pendent bed
 In shaft, or cave, or window-shed;
 And what their household cares, and sports;
 Their summer haunts; and far resorts
 For winter sojourn: till the Muse
 Has thus her meditative views
 Embodied, and in strain address
 Of welcoming her household guest.

Stay thee, thou bird of nimblest wing,
 Herald and harbinger of spring, 980
 As round and round in airy ring
 Thou wheel'st thy flight;
 Or dart'st right on, as if to meet
 My pensive steps, when lo! more fleet
 Than bowyer's shaft, thy turnings cheat
 The following sight:

Stay, swallow, stay! I fain would view
Thy glossy plumes of changeful hue,
Where black, and brown, and green, and blue,
 Conflicting vie; 990
Fain would I view thy belted chest,
Thy sable robe, thy snowy vest,
Thy front and chin in kerchief drest
 Of rufous die:

The steerage of thy forked tail,
Thy dusky legs so short and frail,
Each pointed wing's expansive sail,
 I fain would mark.—
Thou wilt not? Well then, onward go;
Well deem'st thou, thou hast tasks enow, 1000
To hold thee through the summer's glow
 Till winter dark.

Go! and ere the eye of day
Strike the low thatch with level ray,
Trill from thy home to morning gray
 A welcome sweet!
Or call to aid, with sharp shrill cry,
Thy tribes; and dart on him from high,
If owl or kestrel, sailing by,
 Thy precincts threat. 1010

Go! and beneath yon rafter'd shed
Hang thy clay house, and procreant bed;
Or the strait chimney downward thread,
 Safe place to lay

Thy six white eggs, with red besprent;
 Now hovering o'er the steep descent,
 Now in thy murky chamber pent
 The livelong day.

Go! and the mead or hedgerow skim,
 Or, passing, sip the water's brim; 1020
 Or plunge thee in the dimpled stream,
 Thy wing to prune:
 Or with thy mate, now low, now high,
 In sport thy viewless pinions ply;
 And catch with sounding beak the fly,
 Thy nestlings' boon.

Go! and abroad thy nestlings lead,
 Perch'd on the chimney top to feed,
 And train'd the quivering wing to spread
 For doubtful flight: 1030
 Soon shall they make more bold essay,
 Mix with their kindred groups in play,
 And round the village dwellings stray,
 And church-topp'd height;

New watch to see thee duly bring
 The wonted meal, and forward spring
 With small brisk note, and on the wing
 Their dole receive;
 Now fearless follow, here and there,
 The insect myriads of the air, 1040
 And thee to fresh domestick care
 Forsaken leave.

Go! and a mother's task renew,
Thy cares, and toils, and joys pursue,
Long as mild autumn, bath'd in dew,
 The welkin warms;
Till chill October's fickle hour
Shall warn thee with thy tribes to cower
On each slope roof and sunny tower,
 In countless swarms.

1050

Then, where more balmy winters smile,
Speed thee to blest Hesperian isle,
Libya's warm shores, or palmy Nile,
 On wings of wind:
Taught by His voice, who bids thee know
Thy season, when to come and go,
To seek our genial skies, or throw
 Our storms behind.

Then, as we kindly bade thee hail,
When wafted on the vernal gale
Thou hither sped'st thy northward sail,
 With us to dwell;
When Autumn grants no longer stay,
Preparing for thy backward way,
We'll bid thee thus good speed, and say
 A kind farewell.

1060

“Farewell, sweet bird! thou still hast been
Companion of our summer scene,
Lov'd inmate of our meadows green,
 And rural home;

1070

The twitter of thy cheerful song
 We've lov'd to hear; and all day long
 See thee on pinion fleet and strong
 About us roam."

And dost thou no wise lore impart?
 Yes, still thou bid'st us act our part
 With body prompt and willing heart,
 While summer lasts;
 Prepar'd the course to take, which He
 For us appoints, who summons thee 1080
 To climes of grateful warmth to flee
 From wintry blasts.

O, may that warning voice be heard,
 Howe'er reveal'd! To thee, sweet bird,
 The tongue, that speaks the instructive word,
 Within thee dwells:

To us, where'er around we look,
 Each passing wing, the field, the brook,
 But most his own unerring book
 God's wisdom tells. 1090

That book directs our mental sight,
 To mark thy migratory flight,
 With pow'r, surpassing human might,
 On thee imprest:

And trains, by thy observant kind,
 Man's wilful and reluctant mind,
 Its refuge in God's laws to find,
 And there to rest. 1098

A P R I L.

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A P R I L.

HAIL, pleasant month, that lead'st the way
From MARCH austere to smiling MAY,
Allied to each! The mornings froze
Now and again with mantle hoar
Array'd; the dry and biting blast,
Shrewd from the north; the sky o'ercast
With fleet and oft recurring shroud
Of sleety storm and darkling cloud;
Claim kindred to thy brother March.
On that dark cloud the braided arch 10
Imprest; the sparkling sunshine bright,
That now with countless gems of light
The meadow's grassy surface spreads
Resplendent, and with slanting threads
Pierces the falling raindrops' veil,
Now beams unclouded, while the gale
Breathes sweetness from the blooming spray,
Show likeness to thy sister May.

Hail, APRIL! if allowed the claim
Involv'd obscurely in thy name, 20
Else thy subjection deem'd to prove
To APHRODITE, queen of love;
Hail, OPENER of the fruitful year *;
Who universal nature's sphere

Nam, quia Ver aperit tunc omnia, densaque cedit
Frigoris asperitas, fetaque terra parit;
Aprilem memorant ab aperto tempore dictum:
Quem Venus injectâ vindicat alma manu.—*Ov. Fast.* iv. 87.

Terrestrial dost *apertly* bring
 To life, a fresh awakening
 Of vegetation in the gloom
 Immerst of winter's dreary tomb.

There is a simple pure DELIGHT,
 Which the heart feasts on, in the sight 30
 Of NATURE, when aside she throws
 The wintry carments that inclose
 Her vegetable forms, and keep
 Their senses in sepulchral sleep.

Yet are there some, to whom, untaught
 By holy lore divine, the thought
 Of nature's renovating spring
 May rather by dark contrast bring
 Sad thoughts and cheerless. Thus on thee,
 Sweet rural bard of Sicily, 40
 Sweet MOSCHUS, by thy Dorian well
 Reflection's bitter spirit fell,
 And steep'd in tears thy plaintive verse,
 Hung on lamented BRON's hearse.
 "Alas, Alas, the garden flow'r,
 When, spent its transitory hour,
 With shrivell'd leaves and faded dies
 NiPT on its native bed it lies,
 Again the wither'd head shall rear,
 And flourish yet another year. 50
 But we meanwhile, of human birth,
 The great, the brave, the wise of earth,
 As soon as once o'erspent we die,
 Within the earth's dark caverns lie,

Inglorious ; and for ever keep
 A long, an endless, wakeless sleep !"
 Truce to the MELANCHOLY RHIME !
 Be rather ours this lenten time,
 This time of spring reviv'd, to greet
 Returning APRIL's season sweet ; 60
 Pledge of the time, when like the flower,
 Which now with renovated power
 Is waken'd, man again shall bloom ;
 Yet not like it in wintry gloom
 Again to wither and decay,
 But flourish in eternal day !

Then, APRIL, hail ! With CHEERFUL tone
 I bid thee welcome : not alone
 For that thou com'st and bring'st along
 The sight, and smell, and tuneful song 70
 Of leaf, and flow'r of mingled hue,
 And many a plumed warbler new :
 But that, with holy wisdom fraught,
 Thou wak'st withal the grateful thought,
 That, when these pleasant things are o'er,
 Things still more pleasant are in store
 In God's celestial paradise
 " For those that love him ; " passing bliss
 " Which human eye or ear can scan,
 Nor dwell they in the heart of man * ! " 80

Yet PLEASING are the OBJECTS now
 Of song, and flow'r, and bursting bough,

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Which, APRIL, thy enlivening breath
 And show'rs and suns, in holt and heath,
 Are opening. Fearful to sustain
 Imperious March's rougher reign,
 Thy softer wooing they obey,
 Forerunner of the gentle May.

Hail, APRIL! Lo, inspired by thee
 Full many a lovely form I see 90
 Its long lost garniture resume,
 Of WOODLAND LEAF, and WOODLAND BLOOM.

No more with tassels here and there
 Besprent, but in a vesture fair
 The LARCH to welcome thee is seen,
 Unmingled, of the tenderest green.
 Bright tints, to welcome thee, adorn
 Of tenderest green the full-robed THORN.
 Of broader lobes, and darker grain,
 His leaves for thee the MAPLE-PLANE 100
 Develops from their crimson sheaths:
 For thee his bright and twisted wreaths
 Five-finger'd, like a giant's hand,
 The CHESTNUT's lengthening shoots expand.
 Forth from his coral's ruby holds
 The LIME his pale green leaves unfolds.
 The ALDER through the wat'ry mead,
 About the mountain's rocky head
 The BIRCH for thee his leaves displays.
 And ELM and spreading BEECH arrays, 110
 To grace thy course, a thickening skreen;
 This his smooth plates of glossy sheen;

And, stateliest of the woodland realm,
His rougher leaves the blossom'd **ELM**.

And, April, many a **BLOSSOM'D TREE**
Besides appears to honour thee.
If dull to March's wooing, now
For thee the trembling **ASPEN'S** bough
Shows its long drops of scaly down,
White, but with rings of mottled brown. 120
For thee the **ASH-TREE'S** branches gray,
Whose lingering leaves crave longer stay,
Send now their flow'rs unshelter'd forth:
And, offspring of the hilly north,
The beauteous tree of mountain fame,
The **ASH-TREE'S** kinsman but in *name*,
For thee with winged leafits spread
Puts forth his blossoms' cluster'd head.

And wildling **FRUIT-TREES**, such alone
As Britain's isles can boast their own, 130
Indigenous, of more delight
Ministrant to the curious sight,
Than grateful to the craving taste:
The **CRAB** with virgin whiteness graced,
Ting'd with the rose's modest glow;
Of virgin whiteness, like the snow,
The cluster'd **CHERRY**; and more rare,
Of rival white the blooming **PEAR**:
More justly valued for their use,
For swelling pulp, for flowing juice, 140
But not in form, or native die,
Or texture, lovelier to the eye,

Where, nurs'd by man's improving care,
 With Peach and Apricot they share,
 And luscious Nectarine, the praise
 To light the garden's vernal blaze ;
 Or claim, their undivided reign,
 The blooming orchard's rich domain.

Nor, April, fail with scent and hue
 To grace thee LOWLIER BLOSSOMS new. 150
 Not only that, where weak and scant
 Peep'd forth the early primrose plant,
 Now shine profuse unnumber'd eyes,
 Like stars that stud the wint'ry skies :
 But that its sister COWSLIPS nigh,
 With no unfriendly rivalry
 Of form and tint and fragrant smells,
 O'er the green fields their yellow bells
 Unfold bedropt with tawny red,
 And meekly bend the drooping head. 160
 Not only that the fringed edge
 Of heath, or bank, or pathway hedge
 Glows with the furze's golden bloom :
 But mingling now the verdant BROOM,
 With flow'rs of rival lustre deck'd,
 Uplifts its shapelier form erect.

And there, upon the sod below,
GROUND-IVY's purple blossoms show,
 Like helmet of crusader knight,
 Its anthers' crosslike forms of white. 170
 And LESSER PERIWINKLE's bloom,
 Like carpet of Damascus' loom,

Pranks with bright blue the tissue wove
 Of verdant foliage: and above
 With milkwhite flow'rs, whence soon shall swell
 Red fruitage, to the taste and smell
 Pleasant alike, the STRAWBERRY weaves
 Its coronets of threefold leaves
 In mazes through the sloping wood.
 Nor wants there, in her dreamy mood 180
 What fancy's sportiveness may think
 A cup, whence midnight elves might drink
 Delicious drops of nectar'd dew,
 While they their fairy sports pursue
 And roundelays by fount or rill;
 The streak'd and CHEQUER'D DAFFODILL.

Nor wants there many a flow'r beside
 On holt and heath and meadow pied:
 With pale green bloom the upright Box;
 And woodland CROWFOOT'S GOLDEN LOCKS; 190
 And yellow CINQUEFOIL'S hairy trail;
 And SAXIFRAGE with petals pale;
 And purple BILBERRY'S globelike head;
 And CRANBERRY'S bells of rosy red;
 And creeping GROMWELL blue and bright;
 And CRANESBILL'S streaks of red and white,
 Or purple with soft leaves of down;
 And golden TULIP'S turban'd crown
 Sweet-scented on its bending stem;
 And bright-eyed STAR OF BETULEHEM; 200
 With those, the firstlings of their kind,
 Which through the bosky thickets wind
 Their tendrils, VETCH, or PEA, or TARE,
 At random; and with many a pair

Of leafits green the brake embower,
And many a pendent painted flower.

And, APRIL, to thy genial smile
Responsive, countless forms the while
Of ANIMATED LIFE obey
The summons of thy gentle way. 210

If uncongenial blasts before
Have stay'd their passage to our shore,
Now wafted, gentler month, by thee
O'er midland or Atlantick sea,
The threefold tribes of SWALLOWS haste,
In thy first days, or ere to waste
Thy midmost course has run. Nor fails
He of the pinion's broadest sails
To track their path, their brother SWIFT.
But tho' to brave the stormy drift 220
Be his the pinions' amplest spread,
And his with fleetest action sped
The airy flight; more late to come,
More prompt to quit his summer home.
Is he of all the fork-tail'd race:
As if his wint'ry dwelling-place,
Hard by the STORMY CAPE, or far
In regions of the eastern star,
Forbade across the tedious way
Or quick approach or lengthen'd stay. 230

Nor, APRIL, dost thou fail to bring
To greet thee BIRDS of SHORTER WING,

Infirm of flight; yet such as trill
Melodious from their tender bill
Sweet musick. If the WHITE-THROAT's lay,
Flitting from hedgerow spray to spray,
Or gently mounting through the air,
To mark his bosom silvery fair
Invite us:—or from loftiest tree
With brisk unwearied melody, 240
Of sable breast and snowy head
And quivering tail of crimson red,
The slumbering morn the REDSTART wakes:—
Or 'mid the groves and tangled brakes
The WOOD-WREN from his yellow throat
Chants forth his sharp and shivering note.
Peculiar:—or his whisper'd song
That WARBLER, olive brown, among
Thicket, or furze, or sheltering grass;
While untaught peasants, as they pass, 250
Deem the loud whisper of his bill
Is but the *cricket's* chirrup shrill.

Nor, APRIL, think I scorn to see
On newturn'd tilth, or upland lea,
Tho' thin and weak her pow'r of song,
Tripping the nibbling flocks among,
Or hunting brisk from ridge to ridge
The worm minute or lurking midge,
With sulphur breast, and olive wing,
The pretty SHEPHERDESS OF SPRING;— 260
Or in the shelter'd solitudes
Of southern England's sprouting woods,
Hear with his soft repeated coo
His mate the gentle TURTLE woo:—

Or catch on some sunshiny day
 "The plainsong of the Cuckoo gray*,"
 Resounding from his shallow bill
 With cry monotonous, and still
 Repeated; but though rude and dull
 Of sound, of pleasing thoughts is full 270
 "The plainsong" of that shallow bird,
 Then first amid the flushing heard
 Of vernal beauty, at the time
 When the young year is in its prime;
 And, ere that prime be overcast,
 The Cuckoo's homely song is past.

But what's the song, which gives the zest
 To thee, the sweetest and the best,
 Spring's opening season? Which delights
 With liquid lay thy vernal nights, 280
 And summer's, on my native shores,
 Where ITCHIN, gentle river, pours
 His tribute with the inswelling tide
 To mingle; and his western side
 My own SOUTHAMPTON's spires adorn,
 Loveliest of towns; and onward borne
 In that bright bay 'the admiring sight
 Rejoices, and the hills of WIGHT,
 And NETLEY's abbey-hallow'd nook,
 And castled cape of CARISBROOK, 290
 And that famed FOREST's broad array
 Of umbrage by that lucid bay?

Sweet to the eye is that bright bay;
 Sweet to the ear that liquid lay,

* Shakspeare, *Mids. Night's Dream*.

Now warbled in my native coasts :
 Or in the glades, where BAGLEY boasts
 His site by Oxford's classic bowers,
 My mother Oxford's Gothick towers,
 And spires, and domes, and glistening vanes :
 Or in green HORSLEY'S hazel lanes, 300
 My sojourn once ; nor fairer scene
 SURREY 'mong all her copses green
 Can vaunt of, and her cowslip fields !
 That liquid lay no dingle yields
 Northward or west. Nor rugged Wales
 In her deep nooks the wanderer hails ;
 Nor Scotia in the briery brakes
 That shade her dells, and bourns, and lakes ;
 Nor Erin on her emerald hills,
 Nor Cumbria's meres and mountain rills, 310
 Nor Devon's genial groves. Alone
 Of Britain's islands, for thine own
 'Tis thine, lov'd England, where is strew'd
 By flowery meads the good green wood,
 In *midland* or in *southern* vale,
 To claim the peerless Nightingale !

Theme of thy bards ! From him who drew
 At Arno's fount the inspiring dew,
 And bath'd thy yet uncultur'd wild,
 "Pure well of English undefil'd*:" 320
 To him, who late from Gunga's side
 Far o'er the world of waters wide
 Thought on his pleasant native land ;
 And, pilgrim on a distant strand,

* Spenser, of Chaucer.

Half breath'd a pray'r, but breath'd in vain,
 To see his well-lov'd oaks again,
 And near the grave's expecting verge
 Sang, swan-like, his funereal dirge,
 Prelate and Bard*!—And who, with ear
 The concert of sweet sounds to hear, 330
 Feels not the soul-intrancing swell,
 Like him, of lovely PHILOMEL;
 As in the still and silent eve
 Preluding he begins to weave
 The tissue of his silver song:
 Then with brief pauses all night long
 Ascending now, and now descending,
 The scatter'd links of sweetness blending,
 From note to note harmonious changing,
 Through every maze of musick ranging, 340
 Again commences, and again,
 No plaintive melancholy strain
 Of frustrate hopes, but fills the grove
 With descant of enraptur'd love.

How full is PROVIDENCE's plan

Of JOY GRATUITOUS to man!

These little birds, that wing the air
 Through the blithe spring, and seek their fare,
 Reptile and burrowing fly, that lurk
 In the fresh plant, and else would work 350
 Death to the cornfield's sprouting root,
 And blooming garden's embryo fruit:
 How might they through the orchard fly
 And sprouting field; in silence ply

* See Bishop Heber's *Journal. An Evening Walk in Bengal.*

The intrusted task ; nor breathe a note
Of rapture from their tuneless throat !

But He, who these his creatures sends,
Our little help meets, kindly blends
Delight with our substantial good :
And we, as through the good green wood 360
We wander in the pleasant spring,
And hear them "in the branches sing*,"
Behoves us then to Him to raise
A heartfelt thought of grateful praise,
Who bids their little hearts rejoice,
And gives us through their tuneful voice
A portion of their joy to feel !
And thence a pleasing thought may steal
O'er the calm heart with heavenward aim,
Like that OLD MAN'S OF ANGLING FAME, 370
Who courted rural nature's love
On the wild banks of lonely DOVE,
Or sought beside LEA'S "crystal stream
In pleasant meads to solace him."
Then oft, as from the midnight hill,
When every village sound was still,
And safely slept the weary swains,
The Nightingale's loud liquid strains
Breath'd from her little throat he caught,
Devotion wak'd the aspiring thought : 380
"Lord, if such musick thou bestow
On bad men in this world of woe,
Thy saints—what musick shall they prove
Before thee in thy realm of love !"

* Psalm civ. 12.

There's bustle now throughout the air:
 For little forms are busy there
 In social flight; and to and fro
 Still on unwearied wing they go,
 Ere from the east the orient ray
 Streak with faint light the morning gray, 390
 Till fading in the opposing west
 It warn them to their evening rest,
 The **NUPTIAL PAIRS!** for them, whom first
 Hath this their native climate nurst,
 And their perennial home supplied,
 Or the recurring vernal tide
 Invites from distant climes to come,
 And seek with us their summer home,
 Indigenous; the genial hour,
 Alike with unresisted power, 400
 Now 'mid their native fields and groves
 Excites to prosecute their loves,
 And, where their earliest breath they drew,
 The fortunes of their race renew.

And so 'tis bustle all, nor rest
 , Nor respite; for the purpos'd nest
 Till by instinctive skill are sought
MATERIALS rude and quaint, and brought
 Each to the appropriate place, as each
 The general laws of nature teach 410
 The general laws, to all as known
 In common, and to each its own.
 Whate'er on earth's broad bosom lies,
 Or on the passing breezes flies,
 May serve their urgent need, they catch
 And bear abrupt away: from thatch

Of cottage roof, or haystack, draw
 The loosen'd hay, or dangling straw ;
 Or with keen glance inquiring peep,
 And from the rich manuring heap 420
 Take of its matted stores ; or cull
 The wiry hair, or softer wool,
 Of horse or fleecy sheep ; and now
 Twigs from the dry and sapless bough,
 Now tufts of cottony down combine,
 Or of the spider's filmy line ;
 Or fibrous root, or grassy bent,
 Or feathery catkin, with cement
 Compos'd of neatly moulded clay :
 Now the green moss, or lichen gray, 430
 Or leaves, whose gather'd heaps imbed
 The woodland's shady depth, or shred,
 Paper, or wood ; and oft a plume,
 Perhaps their own, the narrow room
 Their nestling's future house to form,
 Without, within, compact and warm.

Nor less diversified in PLACE,
 The DWELLINGS for their future race
 The various kinds are planning. These
 Choose the deep shade of forest trees, • 440
 Or lowlier shrub, or on the edge
 Of cultur'd field the platted hedge,
 Orchard or garden, by the leaves
 Fresh-spreading shelter'd : those the eaves
 Projecting of man's friendly roof
 In populous city, or aloof
 In rural hamlet's dwellings rude,
 Or in the grange's solitude,

Window or rafter'd beam select.
 For some suffices to protect 450
 Their lurking place in mouldering wall
 Or bank, where ever bubbling fall
 The runnels of the living brook,
 Or refuse heap, a hollow nook.
 Those the green lands, and grassy leas,
 And pastures by the waters please :
 These the wild mountain's lone recess,
 Or dwellings of the wilderness
 Secluded ; where they shroud alone,
 Beside some bare o'ermantling stone 460
 From storm defended, or within
 The bowery heath or prickly whin :
 These the old Baron's feudal fort
 Dismantled, or the cloyster'd court
 Of ruin'd abbey ; while the boughs,
 Where the rude sounds of wild carouse
 Once echoed, or the eloisters dim
 Return'd the chant or measur'd hymn,
 Now circle through the lonely grove,
 The thrilling notes of joyous love, 470
 Or what to pensive ear the tone
 May seem of grateful orison.

And then what STRANGELY VARIED SKILL
 Is prompt of each the instinctive will
 To execute by diverse ways
 Of combination, so to raise
 A structure, for the wants design'd
 And comfort of each varying kind !
 To twine the twisted nest ; to plat,
 To braid, to weave ; with felted mat 480

The fabrick of the house to line ;
 Firm on the ground to plant ; to mine
 The hollow earth beneath ; on high
 Wreath'd in the leafy canopy
 To hang the floating ark ; a hole
 Drill'd in the perforated bole
 To hew with griding bill ; or spread
 The level platform ; or on shed
 Of roof or jutting coign suspend
 The plaster'd nest, and round it bend 490
 A circling fence, or penthouse dome
 Above, to shield the nursling's home !
 Such skill is theirs, with wisdom fraught,
 By the Great Source of wisdom taught.
 And if, as fabling bards have said,
 'Twere truth that man, ere he spread
 His canvass to the driving gale,
 Learn'd of the nautilus to sail ;
 'Twere with like show of reason told,
 That, ere the world and time were old, 500
 Man, in the arts of life unskill'd,
 Learn'd of the little birds to build,
 To weave the twisted wreath, and twine
 In banded plats the braided line.

Not so I deem. But who will scan
 Their HANDY WORK, may doubt if MAN,
 Form'd tho' he be this world to rule,
 And in experience' antique school
 Improv'd, with science' ample fruit,
 Means and appliances to boot, 510
 Can emulate the instinctive skill,
 Which with the bended claw, and bill

Acute, and round and moulding breast,
Constructs the feather'd warbler's nest.

But that INSTINCTIVE SKILL, howe'er
By nature's voice distinct and clear
Instructed; from the tract of age,
Experience, observation sage,
Derives no modulating force,
No wise improvement: but the course, 520
Pursued of old, they still pursue,
And know but what of old they knew;
What time the raven and the dove
Went forth from Noah's hand to prove
The land disburden'd of the sea:
Or in the world's first infancy
Each bird, according to his kind,
Stoop'd on the wing to hear assign'd
Its name by men's forefather given;
Or listen'd to the voice from heaven, 530
Which bade it in heaven's face to fly,
And o'er the broad earth multiply
Its proper brood. The high behest,
Which then to form the appropriate nest
Inspir'd them, still its sway maintains;
Still in each untaught bosom reigns;
And with the nest, the feather'd tribes
Their nestling place and time prescribes;
Their eggs, for number, shape, and size
Distinct, and variegated dies; 540
And what the form and plumed grace
Transmissive of each future race.

Come, let us WALK ABROAD, and see
 Amus'd with what variety
 The little architects their work
 Have plann'd ; while some already lurk
 In covert o'er their procreant bed
 Close brooding ; some the uniform'd shed
 Now but prepare, less prompt to ply
 The housewife's duty, till the sky
 More genial and the swelling spray
 Disclos'd forbid prolong'd delay. 550

Nor far afield in search to roam
 Behoves thee ; if about thy home
 Tall tree, or shrub, or budding hedge,
 Or hollow nook, or jutting ledge,
 Meet nestling place afford ; and thou
 Free nature's denizens allow
 To dwell uninjur'd, nor molest
 The fortunes of the rising nest. 560
 For us'd to MEN, and human haunts
 And actions, if no terror daunts
 And drives them from their place preferr'd,
 Full many a sociable bird
 Forgets the wildness of his race,
 At least foregoes it ; and the place
 Of man's abode not his alone
 Esteems, but chooses for its own.

MOLEST THEM NOT ! the vernal bloom
 If chance the prying bill consume, 570
 The ill o'erlook'd they'll more than buy
 The indulgence with the snail or fly
 Excluded :—if the ripening fruit
 Perchance their curious palate suit,

To the pleas'd ear they more than pay
 Its value with the tuneful lay.
 And if at times 'tis haply true,
 That mischief more than good they do,
 Still does not the considerate mind
 And gentle feel a joy refin'd, 580
 A sort of heavenly joy, to see
 God's creatures round about us free
 From harm, rejoicing as they can
 In their brief life's precarious span?
 And would we not desire to know.
 Or wish we rather to forego
 Such joy if purchas'd at the price
 Of some poor trivial sacrifice?

Then hold, nor thoughtlessly molest,
 Or wantonly, the brooding nest! 590
 But if occasion to displace
 Constrain you some o'erwhelming race;—
 For some there are whose presence breeds
 Superior damage, and exceeds
 Their just degree; and where, to ours
 , Oppos'd, their good with rival powers
 Conflicting vies, we deem that they
 Must bend to man's imperial sway,
 Whom the Great God, that all things made,
 With right and pow'r o'er all array'd:— 600
 Against a race on mischief bent
 If sad occasion prompt the intent
 Corrective, monish'd by *his* law,
 From whom your right, your pow'r you draw,
 Life, breath, and all things; ah! refuse
 Beyond the occasion's call to use

The sway entrusted ; and if need
 Have 'gainst the "eggs or young" decreed
 Destruction, list to mercy's claim,
 "Nor with the brood destroy the dam*!" 610

And see the BLACKBIRD and the THRUSH,
 Our inmates in the lowly bush :
 And nestling in the lofty tree
 The MISSEL-BIRD our inmate see.
 Already may the curious eye
 Aslant their patient forms desery
 Close cowering : let the passing glance
 Suffice thee ; nor with rash advance,
 Or motion of the extended arm,
 The mother from her charge alarm ; 620
 The shelter of her pent-house wings
 While o'er the pregnant eggs she flings,
 As yet with motion unendued ;
 Or nestles o'er the callow brood,
 And fosters the now lively nest
 With fervour of the beating breast.

Here on the lawn, in laurustine
 Or holly see the CHAFFINCH twine
 With hair his moss-wove home compact.
 There with like zeal, but less exact 630
 Of skill, the intrusive SPARROW weaves
 His in the spout or jutting caves.

There 'mid the fruit-trees' blooming bowers,
 Where now the warm prolific hours
 Tempt him the ivy buds to quit,
 And through the flowery orchard flit,

* Deut. xxii. 6, 7.

Or garden, for his filmy prey
 Enliven'd by the sunny ray,
 The BLACKCAP see! And now with trill
 Of wild note from his mellow bill 640
 He cheers, and now with gnat or fly,
 Caught sporting in the azure sky,
 Attent his brooding consort feeds:
 And, as the nestling task proceeds,
 Oft may you mark his sable crown
 Exchang'd for her's of russet brown.

Low in the garden's thorny bound,
 Or under, on the shelving mound
 'Mid waving bent-grass, or the bloom
 Of blossom'd furze, her humble home 650
 The YELLOW BUNTING plants. And she,
 Reft of her early progeny
 By thoughtless sport, again prepares
 Her simple nest and household cares,
 The HEDGEROW CHANTER. And above,
 In shelter of the fir-tree grove,
 Where the broad bough its shadow lends,
 Her home the GOLDEN WREN suspends.

Nor, does her duskier KINSMAN fly
 Aloof from man's society; 660
 The streamlet's overarching bank,
 Beset with grass and mosses dank,
 For the broad cedar's arm, or fir
 Wide-spread, or spiral juniper,
 Exchanging; or the hawthorn spray,
 Or strawroof'd thatch of treasur'd hay,
 Or out-house eave, or ivied wall,
 Resounding his blythe madrigal.

A cradle for the GREENBIRD's bed,
 And bowery covert o'er her head, 670
 The forked pine supplies. A hole
 In wall, or tree's decaying bole,
 The OXEYE's artless nest receives.
 With thickening shroud of sprouting leaves
 The quickset hawthorn's prickly spines,
 Or gooseberry's, where the LINNET twines
 His house compact, or cove within
 The shrubby and close-cluster'd whin,
 'Gainst eye or hand a shelter throw
 And barrier from invading foe. 680

Deep in the thorn's intangled maze,
 Or where the fruit-tree's thickening sprays
 Yield a secure and close retreat,
 The dusky BULLFINCH plans her seat.
 There, where you see the cluster'd boughs
 Put forth the opening bud, her spouse
 With mantle gray, and jet-like head,
 And flaming breast of crimson red,
 Is perch'd with hard and hawk-like beak
 Intent the embryo fruit to seek. 690
 Nor ceases from his pleasing toil,
 The orchard's budding hope to spoil,
 Unless with quick and timid glance
 Of his dark eye your dread advance
 He notice, and your search evade,
 Hid in the thicket's pathless shade.

But most of all to haunts of men
 Familiar, though to savage glen
 And woodland wild he oft may roam
 Secluded, oft his wintry home 700

No less the REDBREAST makes his bower
 For nestling in the vernal hour ;
 In thatch, or root of aged tree
 Moss-grown, or arching cavity
 Of bank, or garden's refuse heap,
 Or where the broad-leav'd tendrils creep
 Of ivy, and an arbour spread
 O'er trellis'd porch or cottage shed.

Lo ! as we pass the homestead round,
 At every change of place the sound 710
 Of Robin's voice salutes the ear,
 Carolling to his partner near ;
 And with nice gaze th' observant eye
 May Robin's hidden home descry.
 And memory now recalls the sight,
 'Twas where from LANSDOWN's chalky height
 A pleasant garden-house looks down
 On BLADUD's old romantick town,
 And pinnacled and towered fanc,
 And the slow AVON's sinuous train, 720
 And CLAVERTON's opposing hill ;
 There on my trellis'd window-sill,
 Where climbing evergreens display'd
 An arching and a bowery shade,
 The REDBREAST fearlessly had spread
 'Mid scatter'd leaves her shelter'd bed
 Of feathers, moss, and woven hair ;
 And nestled unmolested there
 By passing steps, and labourer's din
 Without, or watchful eyes within. 730

Yes, 'mid the dark-green ivy twine,
 Couch'd in the trellis'd eglantine,
 We mark'd that tiny form of thine,
 The spring's sweet tide ;
 We mark'd thee weave thy mossy nest,
 And in its hair-lined covert rest
 Thy russet wings and ruddy breast
 Our home beside.

Close didst thou sit: but we might spy
 The sparkle of thy quick dark eye. 740
 As if some reckless foe were by,
 That mischief stirr'd.
 Sit on! away we would not bear
 Those freckled balls, thy anxious care ;
 Nor of thy plumes a feather mar,
 Thou social bird!

Sit on, and keep thy leafy bed,
 Secure in thy secluded shed,
 Till forth thy spotted brood be led
 Yon shrubs among: 750
 When autumn chills the silent day,
 Perch'd on the hawthorn's leafless spray
 They shall their guardian's care repay
 With a sweet song.

Sweet is thy song from vernal tree,
 Though noticed less amid the glee,
 Which swells in general harmony
 Each tuneful throat ;

More valued, when its warbles cheer
The gloom of the departing year, 760
And pour into the pensive ear
Their lonely note.

That lonely note may wisdom preach !
To the lorn mourner it may teach,
'Mid saddest scenes within our reach
Some joys remain ;
A pledge no less, though winter's wing
Obscure our path, another spring
Shall come, and all things laugh and sing
With mirth again. 770

Then welcome to my window-sill,
Garden, or root-house, as thy will
May lead thee, social warbler, still
By man belov'd !
Home in my homestead may'st thou find ;
And give in turn thy greeting kind,
Sweet to the sense, and by the mind
Not unimprov'd !

But who the VARIOUS KINDS can say,
Which through the genial April day 780
In part each pleasant homestead scene,
Lawn, garden, orchard, shrubbery green,
Enliven, as intent to rear
Their coming race our dwelling near ?
And who still more the kinds can tell,
Which distant from our homesteads dwell

A-field, or in the deep recess
 Of wood, or barren wilderness,
 Where few their household haunts may see,
 And nurse their brood in privacy? 790

Yet would the Muse attempt to sing,
 How, prompted by the inspiring spring,
 In the wild brake's impervious shade,
 Or tangled copse, or gloomy glade
 Of woodland, on the dusky ground
 Of bents and oaken leaves embrown'd
 The NIGHTINGALE his mansion plants
 Prolifick, and his love-song chants
 The livelong night at hand to cheer
 Below his brooding partner's ear:— 800

How by the trembling mountain brook,
 Mid rocky glen, in mossy nook,
 Wash'd by the dashing torrent's spray
 Their eggs the lonely DIPPERS lay;
 Or, lurking by the tranquil brim
 Of pool or wood-embowered stream,
 Within the pierc'd and hollowed side
 The KINGFISHERS retiring hide
 Their head's and wing's resplendent sheen
 Of "turkis blue and emerald green*:"— 810

How on wild moor or sterile heath
 Bright with the golden furze, beneath
 O'erhanging bush or shelving stone,
 The little STONECHAT dwells alone,
 Or near his BROTHER of the WHIN;
 Among the foremost to begin

¹ Milton, *Comus*.

His pretty love-song's tinkling sound,
 And nest low seated on the ground,
 Not heedless of the winding pass
 That leads him through the secret grass:— 820

How in the depth of solemn groves
 The CUSHAT and the TURTLE DOVES
 On the tall fir of transverse sticks
 Their artless dwelling rudely fix,
 Where on the gazer's eye below
 Gleam their twin eggs of drifted snow:—

How their broad floors the HERONS make
 On wooded isle, 'mid inland lake,
 Aloft a congregated town ;
 Where on the spare twigs nestling, down 830
 Hangs dangling from the peopled bough
 Their dull-green length of leg:—and how
 Imbedded in the marsh-grown weeds,
 Amid his mansionry of reeds
 And rushy flags, the BITTERN late
 In the dark night salutes his mate,
 And echo o'er the swamp rebounds
 His solemn love-cry's spectral sounds.

Fain too the Muse would stretch her flight
 To the steep rocks of southern WIGHT, 840
 Or where the straiten'd MENAI breaks
 Round rugged PRIESTHOLM, or the peaks
 Of craggy AILSA'S conelike pile,
 Or northern RATHLIN'S simple isle ;
 There on the upright Sea-cliff's edge,
 Along the bare and nestless ledge
 Basaltick, or the cavern'd chalk,
 The WILLOCK and the SHARP-BILL'D AUK

Their marshall'd ranks collective close ;
 Range tiers on tiers, and rows on rows, 850
 Their solitary eggs, and brave
 The sweeping wind and dashing wave :
 Or deeply in the sandy shore
 Their holes the burrowing PUFFINS bore ;
 Sharp as the riving ploughshare, thrill
 The furrow with their knife-like bill ;
 Scoop outward, as with hollow hand,
 With palmate feet the muttering sand ;
 And form a subterranean keep,
 A winding chamber, long and deep. 860

Thence would she fain ascending soar
 The pillar'd head of huge BENMORE
 Abrupt, whose far projecting base
 Old Ocean's giant arms embrace ;
 Or onward, where the boiling seas
 Howl round the incircling ORCADES ;
 Or where KILLARNEY'S ridges steep
 Crown with thick woods the western deep :
 There on the mountain's cloven crest
 Survey far off the EAGLE'S nest, 870
 Where dwells he with his faithful mate
 From age to age in regal state
 Aloft amid the lonely sky :
 Thence marks with penetrating eye
 His destin'd spoil, and seaward flings
 Down, down, his flight on sounding wings,
 Strikes with sure aim, and bears away
 Up-soaring his reluctant prey.

But homelier scenes and milder sights
From Ocean waves and Alpine heights 880
Recall the Muse's wandering wing,
To ponder nearer views ; and sing
The fruits, which yet unsung remain.
Of fleeting April's fertile reign.

Between the furrow's darker rows
The fields their TENDER BLADES disclose.
'Spread with a tint of FRESHEST GREEN
The meadows' speckless face is seen :
Where sprouting willows fringe the side
Of RUNNELS, that beneath them glide, 890
And line the fresh and verdant grass
With broidery of liquid glass.
Such runnels o'er their pebbly bed,
Swift, shallow, bright, translucent, thread
My pleasant Hampshire's breezy hills,
Through bending coombs in eddying rills,
Winding their serpent folds about :
And there the cavern-haunting TROUT
, Whose spotted back's enamel vies
For crimson with the cowslip's eyes, 900
With belly where white lilies hold
Strife with the yellow marigold,
With leap, and splash, and twinkling gleam.
And ripple of the curling stream,
Springs upward on the frequent fly ;
Or from the shadow passing by
Of steps, that on the margin stray
Cleaves, like a dart, the crystal way,

O'ershadow'd by the thickening shoots,
And lurks within the twisted roots. 910

About their DAMS in frolick play
See how the LAMBS at random stray,
In new-felt life exulting! See
Their mutual chases o'er the lea!
And now with skip, and frisk, and bound
They scale the meadow's grassy mound,
Or fearless down the trenches leap,
Or round the planted circle sweep.
And now they seek, by hunger led,
With quivering tail and butting head 920
Each for himself the well-known teats;
By instinct prompted; nor forgets
The feeble young his rightful dam
Distinct, nor she her youngling lamb.
Thus ever watchful nature guides
And prompts them, all the flock besides,
To seek their proper kind alone,
Nor choose another for their own.
Meanwhile sedate, the mother sheep
Close nibbling to their pasture keep, 930
Or on the thoughtless passer-by
Alarm'd direct the uplifted eye,
And watch him with suspicious glance:
Or conscious of the far advance
Of shepherd, with more welcome feed
Approaching, forward start with speed
His footsteps yet unseen to meet
With earnest gaze and welcoming bleat.

See, from their dark recesses creep,
By April from their wintry sleep 940
Awaken'd, many an INSECT form,
And REPTILE! Now the burrowing WORM,
The watchful warbler's welcome spoil,
Unightly through the porous soil
Ascending, heaps the sprinkled ground,
Garden or field, with frequent mound
Offensive to fastidious sense,
Nor void of injury; but thence
Manuring warmth the grass pervades,
And the young corn-field's tender blades. 950
Thus nature, rightly understood,
Still counterpoises ill with good;
While man too oft unheedful still
The good forgets, resents the ill.

His shelly home about him wound,
With hard and spiral pent-house crown'd,
With sinuous course and slimy trail
Forth issues now the frequent SNAIL,
And leaves behind a silvery mark
On wall, or pathway, or the bark 960
Resplendent of the incircled tree.
But nought his spiral canopy
Avails against the prying thrush,
Prompt in his haunt to seek, and crush
Dash'd on the stones, or ruthless drill
With keen and penetrating bill
The yielding shell disperst, and win,
Rich prize, his lurking spoil within.

Now too across the slimy way,
From the close covert, where he lay 970

In den beneath earth's bosom dug,
 Crawls in dense crowds the shell-less SLUG.
 An easy prey, if forth he come,
 Nor less, if in his burrow'd home
 In earth's dark breast he seek repose,
 To the keen tribe of riving crows,
 Voracious; which though little priz'd,
 Perhaps offensive or despis'd,
 Confer, by nature's bounteous plan,
 Substantial benefits on man.

980

See, basking by the sunny brake
 The VIPER keen, and stingless SNAKE!
 Regardful of the poisonous bite,
 Smite, if you will, for safety smite
 The noxious reptile; but forbear,
 And with considerate mercy spare
 Him who nor does nor means you harm!
 Lo, at your step with swift alarm
 Innocuously he glides away,
 And unconcern'd about him play
 The little birds, nor for a foe
 The thicket's harmless inmate know.

990

Yet, mindful of the primal ban,
 By nature or by habit MAN
 Shrinks shuddering with disgust and fright
 Ev'n from the harmless REPTILE'S sight.
 And still with hostile aim we tread
 Remorseless on his "bruised head,"
 As if we fear'd we else should feel
 His venom in our wounded "heel."
 And well it is to bear in mind
 The fall primeval of our kind,

1000

The curse primeval; and to bring
 Instruction from each creeping thing,
 To warn us of our own estate:
 But not to cherish baseless hate
 For all, nor let our wrath be sped
 Injurious on the harmless head!

And see the industrious EMMET's race,
 With forward course and eager pace, 1010
 Forth from their wintry hillock's store
 Blackening the narrow pathway pour,
 And to and fro impatient run,
 Exulting in the vernal sun.

To frolick in the sunny skies,
 The GNATS and silver-winged FLIES,
 And here and there the scatter'd BEES,
 That from the flow'rs and bloomy trees
 Suck nectar in the noontide warm,
 Precursive of the future swarm, 1020
 Abroad with buzz and murmur come.
 The HUMBLE-BEE with louder hum
 Across your path comes booming by.
 And now and then a BUTTERFLY
 Waves in the breath of balmy gales
 The tissue of his plumed scales.
 He first, whose many mingled dies,
 Gold, azure, red, and Argus' eyes
 Hold contest with the PEACOCK's train:
 And he, whose wings of blood-bright grain 1030
 With broidery black and gold excel
 The mottled TORTOISE' polish'd SHELL:
 He that, of crimson frontlet, decks
 Bedropt with central crimson specks

The brightness of each SULPHUR sail,
Bright as the sun: or he that pale
Of lustre, as the pale moonlight,
Expands each fanlike circlet bright
With sable spots and sable tips ;
As the fresh garden-dew he sips, 1040
And flutters o'er the COLEWORT's head,
And marks his future offspring's bed.

Pity, a form so passing bright,
Made, as might seem, to give delight,
A form for loveliness to wear,
And innocence, about should bear
Destruction brooding in its breast,
Surpassing thought, a GENERAL PEST!
What time the egg mature reveals
The expected birth; when forth it steals, 1050
Not like the parent form'd to fly
Abroad, and charm the dazzled eye,
Another PHŒNIX: but in form
A downy, soft, elongate WORM,
On legs multiply to creep
With unperceiv'd and wily step,
The garden's bane, the gardener's grief,
From plant to plant, from leaf to leaf,
With tender green before him graced,
Behind him left a dreary waste. 1060

Till, satiate of destruction's task,
And stript of many a mantling mask,
Each after each, the remnant roll'd
In WINDING SHEET of tissued GOLD,

It dangles from a silken thread,
 In semblance motionless and dead,
 Like Egypt's mummied forms of old:
 Anon to burst the incircling fold;
 Anon to charm the admiring view,
 An IMAGE beautiful, and new, 1070
 And perfect, of its beauteous race;
 Anon to flit from place to place,
 Show to the sun his feather'd mail,
 The blossom's sweetest scent inhale,
 A few brief days; and then to die,
 And leave behind a progeny,
 Like its own infant mask-like state,
 And pregnant with the garden's fate.

Yes, pity that a form so fair
 Should seeds of hidden mischief bear! 1080
 And yet not useless, while the eye
 Feeds on the gorgeous butterfly
 Delighted, if reflexion turn
 A page of wisdom's book, and learn
 How oft appearance may deceive,
 Fair to the sight, the sons of Eve,
 Herself deceiv'd of old: how oft
 The pleasant smile, the manners soft,
 "Like whiten'd sepulchres!" though clean
 Without, may harbour ill within! 1090
 Not useless, if again we look
 With due regard on nature's book;
 And read, how HE, who wisely sends
 The butterfly, to make amends
 Sends us to pierce the larva's skin,
 The PARASITICK FLY, therein

To lurk, and seek its custom'd food,
And check the expected insect's brood :—
Sends us the LITTLE BIRDS with claw
Comprest, and pungent bill, to draw 1100
Abroad where'er in secret place
They dwell, the keen voracious race :—
And to MANKIND withal imparts
Attentive and observant HEARTS,
Intelligence, contrivance, skill,
To cope with what remains of ill ;
Mindful of Him, by whom is sent,
For proof of faith, or chastisement
Of weak distrust, those creeping things,
His army ; and who kindly brings 1110
His aid, that men o'er ill subdued
May triumph and rejoice in good,
And with submissive meekness know
Whence both the bane and blessing flow ! 1114

M A Y

VER

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M A Y.

IT was of old a festive day,
That usher'd in the birth of MAY.
Right early on the jocund morn,
When that delightful month was born,
Or ere the thrush's new-fledg'd brood
Came forth their caterpillar food
To pick upon the dewy lawn,
Scarce lighted by the flickering dawn;
Or ere from his low place of rest,
Hid in the sprouting cornfield's breast, 10
"The lark, the shepherd's clock*," had sprung,
And bath'd in light ethereal sung
Aloft his blithesome roundelay
Of greeting to the morning gray;
While yet the amorous nightingale
Told in still twilight's ear his tale
Of rapturous joy and love repaid,
Thick warbling through the woodland glade;
Regardless of the timely sleep,
The noble from the castled steep, 20
The burgher from the busy change,
From village, hamlet, lonely grange
The peasantry, a mingled throng
Lasses and lads, and old and young,
Pour'd forth promiscuously to pay
OBSERVANCE to the MERRY MAY:

Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*.

With shout and song and winded horn
Alert to wake the slumbering morn ;
To rove the good greenwood, and bring
Away the spoil of early spring, 30
With nosegays deck'd, with garlands crown'd,
And hang each smiling homestead round,
Window, and door, and porch with bowers
Of verdant boughs and blooming flowers.

And then at home the joyous scene !
The MAYPOLE on the village green,
With ribbons, flag, and chaplets bound ;
And pipe and tabor's mirthful sound ;
And merry bells in concert ringing ;
And merry voices blithely singing ; 40
And merry footsteps featly glancing
With jingling bells ; and morris-dancing,
'Mid clash of swords and KENDAL green,
About the season's maiden QUEEN,
In crown and flowery mantle drest,
Gave honour to the vernal feast.

„ Touch'd by the tint of mellowing years,
And view'd far off, the scene appears
One but of innocent delight.
And yet perchance a nearer sight, 50
As space diminish'd oft reveals
Spots that a distant view conceals,
Might open to the thoughtful eye,
Enough to raise a serious sigh,
For much of inconsiderate glee,
Intemperate rout and revelry,

With lack of purity combin'd ;
 Enough to satisfy the mind,
 Howe'er the fancy love to glance
 On by-gone themes of old romance, 60
 'Tis well that now is past away
 The observance of those rites of MAY.

But who what now REMAINS would blame
 Austerely of the MAY-DAY GAME ?
 And who so grave, as when he sees,
 Returning from the woods and leas,
 The lads' and lasses' village troops
 With GARLANDED and RIBBON'D HOOPS,
 All-sparkling with the morning dew,
 Pale primroses, and harebells blue, 70 -
 Bright goldilocks, and pansies pied,
 And scented hawthorn's snow-white pride,
 And all the garniture of spring ;
 And hears them blithely carolling,
 Memorials of the elder times,
 Their rude traditionary rhimes,
 Gathering of doles a little store
 In pilgrimage from door to door :—
 Yes, who so grave, so dull of heart
 To bear in others' joys a part, 80
 As from such pastime, void of guile
 And harmless, to withhold a smile
 And tribute to the GARLAND gay,
 Nor wish them all a merry MAY ?

MAY is the very MONTH of MIRTH !
 And if there be a time on earth,

When things below in part may vie
 For beauty with the things on high ;
 As some have thought earth's beauties given
 For counterparts of those in heaven ; 90
 'Tis in that balmy vernal time,
 When nature revels in her prime ;
 And all is fresh and fair and gay,
 Resplendent with the smiles of MAY.

Not that with universal smiles,
 In these our north Atlantick isles,
 At once, and in her infant days,
 Sweet MAY her blooming face arrays.
 Not that no lurking lingering trace
 Of WINTER still maintains its place 100
 Intrusive on her early hours ;
 Obscures her charms with sullen showers,
 Or with a keen and frosty breath
 Insidious nips the flowery wreath,
 And mars the kirtle green, that deck
 Her shining brow and glossy neck.
 Not that no harsher ruder sway
 The usurper will at times display ;
 With touch of eastern blast consume
 The blacken'd leaf, the shrivel'd bloom, 110
 And crush with iron grasp severe
 The promise of the early year.

But rarely such disastrous force
 Arrests fair May's propitious course.
 While o'er her minor transient harms
 Arise her due reviving charms
 Superior ; winter's lingering frown
 Displace ; repair her half-nipt crown ;

And fling at length a general robe
Of verdure o'er the laughing globe. 120

Yet oft, amid the season fair,
The restless SPIRIT OF THE AIR,
From his cloud-mantled citadel,
Where rain and wind and thunder dwell,
His ready agents sends abroad;
Not with austere and blighting rod
Equipt, to injure or destroy,
But give fertility and joy;
Release the long expected shoot,
Unfold the bud, the embryo fruit 130
Strip of the inclosing blossom bare,
And for the ripening warmth prepare.

Then will a strange fantastick form
Of things attend the transient storm.

Oft when the vernal breezes blow,
You might believe the wintry snow
Was falling fast in fleecy showers;
So thick the CHERRY'S blossom'd FLOWERS,
Or branching PEAR'S, in flakes around
Descending clothe the whiten'd ground: 140
While near from party-colour'd bloom
The APPLE breathes his rich perfume,
Amid the hum of murmuring bees
That hover through the fragrant trees;
And sheds from many a cluster'd head
His show'r of mingled white and red.

Oft might you think the year again
Was chang'd to autumn's withering reign,

So thick the dark brown LEAVES are strew'd
In whirls amid the BEECHEN WOOD ; 150
Save that above, the boughs are seen
Cloth'd with their new-born sprouts of green,
Which, as the winds pass over, play
And twinkle in the sunny ray.

Nor less are seen, as if in strife,
The appearances of death and life,
Where for his blotch'd and sapless leaves,
Its self-bred plague, the LAUREL grieves,
Which now the loosening breezes sweep
Abroad in many a spiral heap, 160
Yellow, or tawny brown : but feels
Meanwhile the mounting juice, that steals
Through the green veins unseen, and shows
The untwisting shoots in spiky rows.
So closely on the falling dead
The coming ranks aspiring tread,
No unfill'd interval between,
That thus with vesture evergreen
The LAURELS ne'er dismantled stand :
„Like that once fam'd IMMORTAL BAND, 170
The pride of PERSIA's turban'd host,
Where ever, to fulfill the post
Scarce void, an armed champion rose ;
And still the band the astonish'd foes
Complete in length and depth defied,
As if their slaughter'd never died.

Tipt with a russet film, that wraps
The tender shoot in conelike caps,

From every branch and branchlet's end
And upright head the FIR-TREES send 180
Their fanlike leaves of vivid die,
Mocking their elder progeny.
While on the mountain's sloping face,
'Mong hardier PINES of SCOTTISH race,
Fresh-sprouting trees their boughs adorn
With leaves gay-smiling, as in scorn
Of those that still maintain their hue
Unchang'd of dun and dingy blue,
'Mid the bright produce of the year;
Unlike as mourners might appear, 190
In weeds of melancholy drest,
At natal or at nuptial feast.

For, lo! by MAY's light touch are seen
Colour'd with VARIED TINTS OF GREEN,
Now deep and dark, now pale and light,
Now almost fading into white,
Now heighten'd to a mellower shade
Of yellow bright or russet red,
The offsprings of the WOODLAND realm!
The glossy BEECH, the rougher ELM, 200
The waving BIRCH's silvery bark,
And pallid LIME, and ALDER dark,
MAPLE and WILLOW's countless race,
Which cloth'd their forms with chequer'd grace
Of leafy garb before, have now
From stem to crown, each branch and bough,
Light twig, and open'd spray array'd
With depth and plenitude of shade.

And they that watch'd with cautious glance
 The settled season's slow advance, 210
 Afraid, amid the sunshine fair,
 Of lurking frost's pernicious air,
 No longer fail they to obey
 The summons of more genial May.
 The OAK, his leaves not wholly spread,
 And tipt with tints of tawny red ;
 The ASH, with wings of leaflets green
 Fresh from the dark bud's sable skreen ;
 With leaves, their lightsome hue that steal
 From FLORA's realm, the white ABELE ; 220
 With sickly hue of pining grief,
 The POPLAR's green and yellow leaf ;
 In verdure deep the WALNUT died ;
 The PLANE's umbrageous shelter wide ;
 And last its foliage to unfold,
 Sure sign to rural wisdom old,
 That the chill breath of mornings frore
 Shall nip the tender shoot no more,
 The MULBERRY yields so dark and dense
 'Gainst summer suns its deepening fence, 230
 That scarce a ray can glide between
 The meshes of that dark-leav'd skreen.

And many a bright and chafic'd FLOWER
 Is blooming 'mid the leafy bower
 Of those tall brethren of the wood :
 Tho' oft beneath the o'erarching hood
 Of close-wove boughs they lurking lie,
 Scarce notic'd by the careless eye.

Where o'er the languid herbage reach
 The branches of the spreading BEECH, 240
 Or, yet unharm'd by woodman's stroke,
 Expands the gnarl'd and knotted OAK,
 The lordly trees in full-rob'd pride
 The strings of pendent blossoms hide.
 Not so, where'er his honey'd store
 The broad and brown-leaf'd SYCAMORE,
 In clusters of green blossoms strung,
 Has from his russet branchlets hung.
 Nor yet from eyes most careless hid
 Is many a spiky pyramid, 250
 Which rising from its full-form'd bed,
 The massive CHESTNUT's rounded head,
 You see with peerless pomp indue
 The park or long-drawn avenue.

Nor does its charms the COPPICE hide,
 In friendly rivalry allied,
 Each lending each a due relief,
 The beauties of the "FLOW'R and LEAF."

Sec, spines and saw-like leaves among, -
 The BARBERRY's yellow bunches hung, 260
 Whose stamens, as with life induced,
 Shrink from the touch of fingers rude;
 And, shrinking, on the pointal's head
 The fructifying pollen shed:
 Of aspect pleasing, but of scent,
 Which the smell loves not, redolent:
 But if within its noxious sphere
 Abortive made, the wheaten ear

Robb'd of its swelling grain decay,
The cautious Muse forbears to say. 270

Clad with a terminating crown
Of bloom, and leaves of cottony down,
Two rival wilding beauties see,
WHITE-BEAM, and PLIANT MEALY-TREE.
And see with peerless blossoms crown'd,
In cluster'd tufts compact and round,
Like vegetable snow-balls blows,
Queen of the copse, the GUELDER ROSE:
Transplanted thence, her native grace
Competes with plants of foreign race 280
Among the shrubbery's pride inroll'd;
LABURNUM'S drops of pendent gold,
Sweet LILAC'S many-colour'd bloom,
HEATH'S crimson bells, and silver BROOM;
AZALEA'S nectar'd flamelike rays,
And PONTICK ROSE-TREE'S purple blaze.

See too, to grace the coppice wild,
May-born, our Britain's native child,
The MEDLAR'S broad and single eye;
And, priz'd for village pharmacy, 290
The ELDER'S crowded cups minute;
SERVICE with hope of autumn fruit;
And MAPLE'S spikes of florets green;
And HAWTHORN, fam'd 'mid vernal scenc
For gracing MAY'S propitious hour
With prodigality of flower,
Pink-anther'd 'mid its petals pale,
And lending fragrance to the gale;
Hail'd from its fair and sweet array
The NAMESAKE of the lovely MAY. 300

Fair is the Hawthorn's robe of white,
 One sheet of bloom, the raptur'd sight
 Entrancing: fragrant is the scent
 Thence to the vernal breezes lent.
 And yet I know not, but the MAY
 Does too exuberant charms display,
 A conscious beauty, unretir'd,
 Which seeks and claims to be admir'd.
 And so the mind with more delight
 Is gladden'd, as the smell and sight; 310
 To see the *pink-tipt buds* that lie
 Veil'd in their leafy canopy,
 And unobtrusive on the gale
 A fresh and *chasten'd* sweet exhale;
 Than when with one *unsparing* blaze
 Full-blown they strike the dazzled gaze,
 And on the satiate smell o'erspent
 Diffuse a *languor-breathing* scent.

RETIRING VIRTUES, mild and meek,
 Our heart's benevolence bespeak; 320
 Nor fail we to admit their power,
 When only shadow'd in a flower.
 For many a flow'r by nature wild
 Is sown, of aspect meek and mild,
 Which seems though faintly to express
 Those virtues in their loveliness:
 Thence by some union undefin'd
 To our complacent feelings kind
 Commended, and allow'd a share
 In our benign regard to bear, 330

Beyond the admiration shown
For their exterior charms alone.

And, though to some the thought may seem
A vision or fantastick dream,
Now as the hands of time unroll
Another fold in nature's scroll,
Illumin'd by the sportive Hours
With portraiture of countless flowers ;
Methinks with mixture less we see
Of kind goodwill the PÆONY 340
Undaunted to the sunbeams spread
Her flame-like rays and mantle red :
Or IRIS' yellow banner flaunt
Ambitious o'er her wat'ry haunt ;
Or CAMPION's cloven cups diffuse
On blushing fields their roseate hues ;
Or FOXGLOVE's purple bells adorn
The heath, or with their nectar'd horn
Blue COLUMBINES the grassy leas :—
Yes, with less kindness mark we these, 350
Though beauteous be their form, and gay
Their tints, and gorgeous their array ;
Than see within the bushy dell
Half-hid the yellow PIMPERNEL
Beside the moss-grown runnel peep ;
Or on the clefts the CISTUS creep,
Low-trailing, of the chalky down ;
Or WOODRUFF lift her fragrant crown
Of star-like blossoms pure as snow,
With radiate fringe of leaves below, 360
In greenwood shade ; or SPEEDWELL strew
With sapphir petals bright and blue,

And pearl-like eye, the hedgerow bank ;
 Or in some hollow woodland dank,
 (Such woodland pleasant ESSEX yields
 By abbey'd COGGESHALL'S garden fields,
 My home erewhile and pastoral care,)
 See the MAY-LILY, chaste and fair,
 Stud with her pendent globules white
 The stem o'erarching, on the sight
 Scarce peering from their verdant shade,
 More by the scented air betray'd.

370

Yes, in these little plants that grow
 In haunts sequester'd, meek and low
 Of stature, signs imprest I see
 Of gentleness and modesty.

And therefore as, the vernal tide,
 Each grows my rural path beside,
 Thoughts of kind greeting forth I send
 To hail it as a welcome friend.

380

While thus in moralising strain
 With one, the loveliest of the train,
 As with a living thing the Muse
 Holds converse, and her theme pursues
 On hint, by lips of WISDOM taught,
 Of heavenly lore and holy thought.

FAIR FLOW'R, that lapt in lowly glade
 Dost hide beneath the greenwood shade,
 Than whom the vernal gale
 "None fairer wakes on bank or spray,
 Our England's LILY of the MAY,
 Our LILY of the VALE!

390

Art thou that "Lily of the field,"
 Which, when the SAVIOUR sought to shield
 The heart from blank despair,
 He show'd to our mistrustful kind,
 An emblem to the thoughtful mind
 Of God's paternal care?—

Not thus I trow; for brighter shine
 To the warm skies of PALESTINE 400
 Those children of the East!
 There, when mild autumn's early rain
 Descends on parch'd ESDRELA'S plain,
 And TABOR'S oak-girt crest;

More frequent than the host of night,
 Those earth-born stars, as sages write,
 Their brilliant disks unfold;
 Fit symbol of imperial state
 Their sceptre-seeming forms elate,
 And crowns of burnish'd gold. 410

But not the less, sweet springtide's flower,
 Dost thou display the Maker's power,
 His skill and handy-work,
 Our western valleys' humbler child,
 Where in green nook of woodland wild
 Thy modest blossoms lurk.

What though nor care nor art be thine,
 The loom to ply, the thread to twine;
 Yet, born to bloom and fade,

Thee too a lovelier robe arrays, 420
 Than e'er in ISRAEL'S brightest days
 Her wealthiest king array'd.

Of thy twin leaves the embowed skreen,
 Which wraps thee in thy shroud of green ;
 Thy Eden-breathing smell ;
 Thy arch'd and purple-vested stem,
 Whence pendent many a pearly gem
 Displays a milk-white bell ;

Instinct with life, thy fibrous root,
 Which sends from earth the ascending shoot, 430
 As rising from the dead ;
 And fills thy veins with verdant juice.
 Charg'd thy fair blossoms to produce,
 And berries scarlet red ;

The triple cell, the twofold seed,
 A ceaseless treasure-house decreed,
 Whence aye thy race may grow,
 As from creation they have grown,
 While Spring shall weave her flowery crown,
 Or vernal breezes blow :— 440

Who forms thee thus with unseen hand ;
 Who at creation gave command,
 And will'd thee thus to be,
 And keeps thee still in being through
 Age after age revolving, who
 But the GREAT GOD is He ?

Omnipotent, to work his will ;
 Wise, who contrives each part to fill
 The post to each assign'd ;
 Still provident, with sleepless care 450
 To keep, to make thee sweet and fair
 For man's enjoyment, kind !

"There is no God," the senseless say :—
 "O God, why cast'st thou us away?"
 Of feeble faith and frail
 The mourner breathes his anxious thought :—
 By thee a better lesson taught,
 Sweet LILY of the VALE.

Yes! HE, who made and fosters thee,
 In reason's eye perforce must be 460
 Of majesty divine :
 Nor deems she, that his guardian care
 Will He in man's support forbear,
 Who thus provides for thine.

Still ANIMATION holds its way
 Rekindled by the breath of MAY :
 And ever changing, ever new,
 Fresh objects offers to the view,
 Of Him, whom nature's forms delight,
 Each common sound, and smell, and sight. 470

Along the DAISY-POWDER'D MEADS,
 Prankt with the CROWFOOT'S golden heads.

Where the green creeping TREFOIL tips
 His yellow keel with sanguine lips,
 And the NEW HERBAGE freshness breathes,
 And PLANTAIN'S many-blossom'd wreaths
 Succinct in imbricated rows
 His dark and cluster'd heads inclose,
 Like Negro's swarthy temples round
 With white and twisted turban bound ; 480
 The new-born COLT, so tall and slim
 Of form, with tottering length of limb,
 Begins his strengthening powers to feel,
 To frisk, to skip, to run, to wheel
 O'er the smooth sward with leap and bound ;
 Till, startled by some unknown sound,
 (As all is new, and apt alarm
 To cherish,) from expected harm
 He speeds to seek the refuge tried,
 And couches by his mother's side. 490

Forth tempted by the silent eve
 Her form amid the fern to leave,
 Where through the livelong day she sate,
 As fearful of impending fate,
 Steals out the timid HARE to feed.
 See her along the hedgerow lead,
 The cornfield's Jewy ridge along,
 And garden tuif her sportive YOUNG !
 Her young about her sports with glee,
 As best may youth bescem : but she, 500
 Train'd in sedater course by age,
 Perhaps by danger render'd sage,

Surveys with stealthy pace the ground ;
 Marks each suspicious sight and sound
 With ear erect and backward eye ;
 Prompt to her refuge-place to fly,
 And shroud her in the secret lair,
 If living thing her vision scare,
 Or rustling breeze or footstep shake
 The foliage of the tranquil brake.

510

On the smooth surface of the clear
 Translucent water, where appear,
 As in a sheet of silver'd glass,
 Revers'd the green and waving grass,
 The flow'rs that on the margin rise,
 The fleecy clouds and azure skies ;
 Are countless INSECT forms at play,
 Like bubbles in the sunny ray
 Quick glancing. Now behold ! they skim,
 As if in dance, the rippling brim,
 Each other, as by fancy led,
 Pursuing, and incessant thread
 Now here, now there, by countless ways
 The windings of the tangled maze.
 So have I seen the skaters glide
 In mazes o'er the harden'd tide,
 On the bright steel smooth-sliding glance,
 And weave the many-mingled dance.
 Now from the liquid sport they spring
 Aërial, and the filmy wing
 To the warm sunshine show, and there
 Amid the soft and balmy air

520

530

Exult unwearied, and the clue
 Of that unrivall'd dance renew.
 Or high in labyrinthine flight,
 Above the fir-tree's topmost height
 They float in many a tortuous spire :
 As when the bramble-kindled fire
 Sends forth the column'd smoke to rise
 Slow curling 'mid the calm clear skies. 540

But on the smooth and silvery lake
 The FISH meanwhile their pastime take.
 Now with elastick spring, and steep
 Ascent, above the pool they leap,
 Intent to catch the fluttering fly
 Amid his reckless ecstasy :
 And where the waters' face they thrill,
 Broke by the plash, the waters still
 In widening rings concentrick run,
 And curl and sparkle in the sun. 550
 Now plunging down, away they glance
 Right forward through the smooth expanse,
 And with the bow-shot arrow's speed :
 Now dive within the embowering reed,
 Or lurk beneath the cavern'd brink ;
 Where their fring'd flow'rs of white and pink
 The spik'd and three-leav'd BOGBEANS show :
 Than which not England's Naiads know,
 Wherewith to braid their flowing hair,
 A plant more graceful or more fair. 560

But hark ! as by the cornfield's side,
 Where the fresh blades aspiring hide

With wavy folds its furrow'd breast,
 The ear what startling sounds arrest!
 Perhaps you deem, from fenny bog
 You hear the croaking of the frog
 Monotonous, afar or nigh
 The same untun'd repeated cry.
 Again the sound! Now here, now there,
 It tempts to follow: but howe'er 570
 Your steps the fleeting cry pursue,
 You'll scarce the cause retiring view;
 You'll scarce with foot or eye o'ertake
 The dark form of the mottled CRAKE;
 As his long legs low-bending pass
 Through the high corn, or waving grass,
 With body prone; nor dares his wing
 Up from the verdant covert spring.

Less likely of your aim to fail,
 If with loud call the whistling QUAIL 580
 Attract you, 'mid the bladed wheat
 To spread the skilful snare, and cheat
 With mimic sounds his amorous ear,
 Intent the female's cry to hear.
 For now the vernal warmth invites
 Froth Afric's coasts their northward flights;
 And prompts to skim on nightly breeze
 Sicilian or Biscayan seas.

And now does universal love
 Each feather'd breast to action move: 590
 And on the task of BUILDING goes,
 And brisk the little builders; those,

Who had crewhile their work begun,
 Allur'd by APRIL's showery sun;
 And those, their corner-stone to lay
 Who waited till the warmer MAY.

All but the Cuckow! She alone
 Nor place of nestling of her own;
 Nor brooding toils, nor joy, that flows
 From care and love maternal, knows. 600
 Lo. where she scuds across the lea
 A homeless waif, from tree to tree!
 The little birds her flight pursue
 Importunate, as if they knew
 Of secret mischief undefin'd
 Against the common weal design'd.
 So on from tree to tree she flies,
 From hedge to hedge, with peering eyes
 Inquisitive; intent to watch
 Some precinct ill secur'd, and catch 610
 The precious moment when to stop,
 And her lone egg unnotic'd drop
 In LINNET'S, PIPIT'S, BUNTING'S dome,
 Or chief the TITLING'S vacant home;
 And passing leave the intruder there
 Abandon'd to the stranger's care.

Strange, among creatures prone to prove
 The fervour of maternal love,
 Should one be found so hard of heart,
 As to refuse the mother's part, 620
 To kind affection's natural call
 Insensate; yet so wise withal,
 To find a step-dame to supply
 Her own'd renounc'd maternity!

Strange, that the foster-bird should feel
For one so left a parent's zeal ;
Still nurse the intruder in her nest,
Of her own offspring dispossess ;
Still toil to feed him with the food
(Collected for her proper brood ;
Nor know, to size ungainly grown,
The giant monster from her own !
Strange, that alert alone to bear
His foster-dam's maternal care,
The intrusive young should use his power
For mischief in the natal hour ;
Prompt from their birthright to displace
His fellows of the adoptive race,
And hurl them o'er the mansion's brim
With hollow'd back and struggling limb ;
Fain like the Turk to reign alone,
Nor bear a brother near the throne !

Yes! curious is the tale and strange!
But REASON, howsoe'er she range
Conjecture's realm to scan the CAUSE,
Plex'd at length her wing withdraws
From roving in a boundless sky;
Hides with its folds her downcast eye,
Too weak with unassisted sense
To pierce the depths of PROVIDENCE;
And breathes the meek and lowly thought,
It is a work which GOD hath wrought!

Such thought the mind will oft present
To those on harmless pastime bent,
Or knowledge, who their ears and eyes
Expand to nature's mysteries.

Yes, MYSTERIES! For nature's range
 Throughout mysterious is and strange :
 Though, often seen, things lose their force,
 And seem as if of common course. 660
 But they, who seek the depths to sound,
 Wherewith those common things abound ;
 And onward go from what they see,
 To question "How can such things be?"
 Must oft be satisfied to bear
 For answer, ev'n that such things are :
 Are by his pleasure, who assign'd
 Their laws to each created kind,
 Whose will his unform'd works obey'd,
 Who spake the word, and they were made. 670
 Then who the UNIVERSAL CAUSE,
 Save as his word the veil withdraws,
 And deigns his lineaments to show,
 Who the GREAT CAUSE can seek to know ?
 Who, fathom'd by his shallow mind,
 The Almighty to perfection find,
 How deep, how high, how long, how broad ?
 Who can "by searching find out God*?"

Of the plum'd architects but FEW
 Now *first* their building cares pursue. 680
 Chief of the few, the long-wing'd race,
 Varying in form, and skill, and place.
 Recruited from her distant flight,
 And urg'd by memory's fond delight

In the lov'd haunt, which erst she knew,
 To plant her mansionry anew,
 The SWALLOW forms herself a nest,
 Where she may lodge her fostering breast,
 And rear her young: a tube-like bed,
 In steeple, barn, or straw-built shed; 690
 Or where the steep ascending shaft
 Forms for the smoke a straiten'd draft,
 Sooth'd by the warmth of neighbouring flame,
 And safe beyond the owlet's aim.

But on the sea-cliff's breezy face,
 The MARTLET for her nestling place,
 (The MARTLET with her breast of white,
 And building with the dawning light,
 That so her home of pendent clay
 May harden with the sunny day,) 700
 Or coign, some jutting ledge below,
 Buttress or window, in a row
 Of kindred domes each other near,
 Suspends her mud-form'd hemisphere.
 There waken'd with the wakening ray
 She sits, and twittering bids "good day,"
 And calls the sluggard forth to shake,
 Like her, dull slumber off, and take
 His ramble o'er the dewy lawn,
 And taste the freshness of the dawn. 710

Their chambers in the cavern'd SAND,
 With rival depth of foresight plann'd,
 And wrought with rival workmanship,
 Close clinging to the surface steep,
 The smaller MARTINS delve: with lill,
 Like pick-axe sharp, the hill-side drill;

With body, like a compass, trace,
 Slow wheeling round, the intended space,
 The burrow's future bore; with claw
 Abroad, as with a shovel, draw 720
 The loosen'd sand, that so may lie,
 Safe in that winding gallery,
 On artless nest the expected brood;
 Nor in their high and strait abode
 Feel from above the incursive flight
 Of kestrel, or rapacious kite;
 Or keen assault of climbing foe,
 Weasel, or prowling stoat below.

WHAT bids these birds of kindred race,
 Each in its own appropriate place, 730 •
 Each with its own appropriate aim,
 Contrivance, skill, their mansions frame?
 What but the VOICE, in distant climes
 Which bids them know the appointed times
 And seasons, hitherward to come,
 And find with us their summer home?
 "The still small voice," whose warnings reach,
 Apart from utter'd sound or speech,
 In silence to the listening mind:
 And plainer than the vollied wind, 740
 That rends the mountain, breaks the rock,
 Than lightning flame, or earthquake's shock,
 As once to Israel's doubting seer,
 Proclaims that nature's God is here!

See too, arriv'd from ASIA's lands
 Remote, or AFRIC's southern sands.

Whether in APRIL's closing day,
Or in the prime of newborn MAY,
At once without delay or rest
The SWIFT begins to build her nest, 750
Her eggs to lay, her young to rear.
No time has she for loitering here ;
Among the LAST our shores to find,
Though fleetest than the wings of wind ;
Impatient o'er the severing sea
Among the first our shores to flee.

So to the task their race to breed
At once without repose they speed :
In some tall castle's crannied roof,
Or tow'r, or tapering spire aloof, 760
With grass and feathers, as they fly,
Swept from the ground, while hurrying by
They stoop the wing, afraid to light
By purpose from their airy flight,
Lest the short leg and lengthen'd wing
Should let them from the upward spring.
Thus hurrying on with ceaseless haste
• They form their rustick dwellings placed
Above the earth's dull surface high,
Pleas'd inmates of the vaulted sky. 770
And there the patient female keeps
From morn till night ; while near her sweeps
Her sable partner round and round,
With oft-repeated squeaking sound,
Of watchful love a serenade,
By gentler notes within repaid.
Till, as the evening waxes late,
A few brief minutes for his mate

Suffice to quit the future brood;
 To snatch in haste her scanty food; 780
 And stretch the cramp'd and wearied limb.
 Then in the shade of twilight dim,
 Together to the wonted height
 The faithful partners speed their flight,
 And the short night together rest
 Incumbent on the cherish'd nest.

Of all the feather'd tribes, that meet,
 In crowded city, or retreat
 Of rural scenes, the British eye,
 What PINION with the SWIFT's can vie? 790
 As round the tow'rs of antique fame,
 Stamp'd with the ROMAN's storied name,
 Or SOUTHWARK's ancient-hallow'd pile,
 Her Lady-shrine and pillar'd aisle,
 They wheel their airy circles fleet,
 And thread untouch'd the peopled street:
 Or as where THAMES irriguous leads
 By CHELSEA's domes through FULHAM's meads
 His broad expanse of flood, they skim
 With dripping wing the dimpled brim; 800
 Or through the low-brow'd arches glide
 That bridge the smooth and swelling tide;
 Pursuing keen the frequent fly:
 Or screaming mount the azure sky,
 Beat with quick strokes the air, or o'er
 Heav'n's face with unmov'd pinions soar,
 And dare the stretch of LYNCEUS' sight
 To track them through their mazy flight.

How passing wonder is the gift
 Of FLEETNESS to the unrivall'd SWIFT, 810

Which, ere a double pulse can beat,
 Is here and there, with motion fleet
 As ARIEL'S wing could scarce exceed ;
 And full of vigour, as of speed,
 Forestalls the dayspring's earliest gleam,
 Nor fails with evening's latest beam !

How passing wonder is the MIGHT,
 Which on a bird, with pow'rs of flight
 So gifted as the Swift, can lay
 Injunction through the livelong day, 820
 In life's, in health's, in vigour's prime,
 To watch the lazy-footed time,
 As if in indolent repose ;
 The sweeping breadth of wing to close ;
 Inmur'd, inactive sit ; nor roam
 An instant from her lonely home !

But what is each, the state of REST
 Or ACTION, but the LAW imprest
 By nature on the obedient kind ?
 And what is nature's law, the mind 830
 Instructing, but a silent sign
 Perspicuous of the will divine,
 The MAKER SPIRIT'S high behest,
 Who forms the wing, directs the rest ;
 By whom " the time, the season's given
 For every purpose under heaven*!"

What second cause postpones the time,
 When, pilgrim from a distant clime,

* Eccles. iii. 1.

So late the travell'd Swift prepares
 To mingle in domestick cares, 840
 The observant mind may guess: or why
 The minor CHASER of the FLY,
 So late to seek our foreign fields,
 So late his summer sojourn builds.
 Why in thick bush, or ancient hole
 Pierc'd in the dodder'd Ash-tree's bole,
 The COLDFINCH, clad in vesture pied,
 By crystal ULLE's romantick side,
 Or WINDERMERE's steep wooded glades,
 Or princely LOWTHER's castled shades; 850
 Or why the spotted BEAM-BIRD gray,
 Not till the merry month of May,
 On beam, or hole, or creeping vine
 Or sweet-brier wall, begins to twine
 His partner's dwelling in our coast
 Meridian: where on neighbouring post,
 Smooth rail, or leafless branch he sits,
 And, as the thoughtless insect flits
 Before him, from his watch-tow'r starts,
 Swift on his fluttering victim darts
 With zig-zag flight, and bears him thence
 Back to his favourite eminence;
 To take his stated watch anew,
 Again with bristly bill pursue
 And rapid wing the filmy prey,
 And to his wonted haunt convey.

Or why, when May is well-nigh past,
 Of Britain's summer-birds the last
 To reach our shores, in waving fern
 Or furze, beside some bosky bourn, 870

Hid from the prying eye of day
 Their nestless eggs the NIGHT-JARS lay.
 Thence issuing forth in evening gloom,
 With hiss, and buzz, and solemn hum
 As of the spinner's whirling wheel,
 Unseen on noiseless wing they steal,
 Smooth gliding through the unfann'd air;
 With open mouth, and bristly hair
 Fringing that cavern wide, prepar'd
 To clasp the beetle's mailed shard,
 Or circling chase in airy ring
 The night-moth's soft and downy wing,

380

Much slander'd bird! Though vulgar fame
 'Traduce, and stamp thee with a NAME,
 Denoting to the *goat-herd's* care
 A wrong, nor dost nor canst thou bear;
 Thy flight though few or see or hear
 Thy three short months of sojourn here;
 We bid thee welcome to our isles!

Not harming us, to us the whiles,

390

Thou'rt PROVIDENCE'S gift for good,
~~Not~~ hawking for thy nightly food

'Tis thine the peopled air to free
 From noxious tenants! And like thee,
 How many a blessing God has sent
 To man, of good an instrument;
 Which, sunk in negligent repose,
 UNGRACIOUS MAN nor owns nor knows,
 Or dreams with heedless mind, or will
 Perverse, an instrument of ill!

900

Not yet arriv'd, or forc'd to wait
 The arrival of their lingering mate,
 These wandering birds must needs delay
 Their nestling till the later May.

But he, who makes his native wood
 Resound his screaming harsh and crude
 Continuously the season through;
 Though scarce his painted wing you'll view
 With sable barr'd, and white, and gray,
 And varied crest, the lonely JAY: 910
 And he, who 'mid the native rows
 Of his still favourite cornfield chose
 Three moons ago his mottled mate,
 Her early partner and her late,
 The faithful PARTRIDGE: why should they
 So long their nestling cares delay?

Thou too, who deck'st the early spring
 With glistening of thy golden wing,
 From bough to bough in sportive play
 Irradiate with the sunny ray, 920
 With sable crown, and frontlet red;
 Thou in our thickets born and bred,
 And never from thy native home
 Allur'd to foreign climes to roam:
 Say, pretty GOLDFINCH, why should'st thou
 Forego thy household cares till now?
 For ever welcome to thy side
 Appear'd thy party-colour'd bride:
 And still at hand, whereon to lay
 • Thy dwelling, was the hawthorn spray; 930
 Or elm-tree mantled with the twine
 Of briar or twisted eglantine:

Still were at hand, wherewith to mould,
 Mosses and bents, thy close-knit hold,
 With wool and lichens intertwin'd,
 And tufts of downy willow lin'd:
 Still was at hand, whereon to feed
 Thy young, the spiral fir-tree's seed,
 The bank with dandelions spread,
 Coltsfoot, or groundsel's yellow head. 940
 Then, pretty GOLDFINCH, why should'st thou
 Forego thy household cares till now;
 Abroad a licens'd wanderer roam,
 Nor plan till now thy felted home?

Howe'er it bè, for darkling still
 And fathomless the Maker's will,
 And oft the inquiring mind to try
 More apt, than minister reply;
 Thy female see her wing of gold
 Now o'er thy peerless nest unfold 950
 With zeal that wearies not; while thou,
 Perch'd on the Apple's blossom'd bough,
 Dost sweetly with love-dittied song
 Help the slow-pacing hours along.

„Sing, pretty bird! Though bright and gay
 The colours of thy plum'd array,
 More gay and bright than often own
 The natives of our temperate zone;
 To thee the spriteliness belong
 And sweetness of the vernal song, 960
 Such as not oft the brilliant dies
 Can boast, illum'd by tropick skies.

Sing, pretty bird ! Thy spritely lay
 And sweet, thy plumage bright and gay,
 Thy manners gentle, docile, mild,
 Oft tempt us from thy native wild,
 From feeding on the thistle's down,
 To bear thee to the dingy town,
 And there thy captive form include
 In the lone cage's solitude.

970

Sing, pretty bird ! Though captive, sing ;
 Prune with sharp beak thy shining wing,
 With cheerful heart and motion brisk
 About thy wiry prison frisk ;
 Hop on thy mistress' offer'd hand,
 Take what she gives with motion bland,
 The seed or sugar sweet, and pay
 Her bounty with a merry lay.

Sing, pretty bird ! I'd rather see
 And hear thee, blythe, alert, and free,
 And haunting unrestrain'd at will
 The orchard's bloom, the thistly hill :
 But since at length the wintry cold
 Will come, and earth retentive hold
 With frozen grasp the buried seed,
 And snow conceal the tufted weed ;

980

Sing, pretty bird, though captive, sing !
 To thee no ill shall winter bring,
 As to thy race at liberty,
 Cold, want, disease : but thine shall be

990

The crystal fount, the well-fill'd tray,
 And warmth by night, and song by day;
 And lengthen'd life and hoary age
 Attend thy cheerful hermitage!

How wonderful the INSTINCTIVE POWER,
 Which, VARYING with the varying hour,
 Far as the occasion calls, extends;
 And, when attain'd its destin'd ends,
 Surceases: till reviving need
 Prompts it again its part decreed 1000
 With renovated force to play,
 Again to stop, again decay!

See, COUCH'D upon her pregnant NEST,
 The mother bird with fostering breast,
 And hovering plumes extended, sits;
 And scarce her charge tenacious quits,
 Save with impatient haste to steal
 From neighbouring fields the needful meal!
 So nature prompts her: lest bereft
Of procreative warmth, and left 1010
 Unshelter'd, the intrusive air
 The vivifying spark impair,
 And the corrupted embryo dwell
 Abortive in the torpid shell.

So sits she: till the star of night,
 Which first with rim of silver light
 Survey'd her sitting, hath fulfill'd
 The circlet of the waxing shield,
 And hastens on with gradual wane
 To trim the silver rim again. 1020

The brood is hatch'd. Behold her still,
 To GUARD her YOUNG from breezes chill
 And drenching raindrops, cowering fling
 Above the nest the brooding wing,
 Fed by the male's assiduous care!
 Behold her next his labour share,
 And for their nurslings day by day,
 And hour by hour, the MEAL PURVEY;
 And to and fro, abroad, at home,
 Now go, and now returning come, 1030
 With grain, or worm, or insect food,
 To gratify the craving brood!
 To all in turns, howe'er compest
 Within the crowded clamorous nest;
 To all, howe'er, with gaping beak,
 And outstretch'd neck, and cry, they seek
 Importunate the food to reach;
 To all attentive, and to each,
 Behold her still the dole bestow,
 And none o'erfeed, and none forego! 1040
 Then, when the downy texture thin
 Has deepen'd on the callow skin,
 And the soft yielding pens assume
 The firmness of the bearded plume,
 And the broad van and pinion strong
 Have now equipp'd the well-fledg'd young
 To float upon the liquid air;
 Behold her, with maternal care,
 CONDUCT the yet unpractis'd race
 Forth from their secret nestling place, 1050
 To perch upon the neighbouring edge
 Of sloping roof, or window ledge,

Or bush, or branch of spreading tree,
 Their native homestead's canopy!
 Behold her there about them flit;
 And tempt with voice and act to quit
 Their station on the airy height;
 Spread their fresh plumage for the flight;
 On balanc'd wings the leap essay,
 And follow where she leads the way! 1060

'Tis done! Though many a fearful pause
 The half-spread fluttering wing withdraws;
 Though piteous cries of terror weak
 The trembling breast's reluctance speak;
 'Tis done! They tempt the daring flight,
 And revel in the new delight.
 But FRAIL the LINK, that now inchains
 The scattering race. For nature trains,
 Or soon shall train the youngling brood
 To ramble, as they will, for food; 1070
 To hunt amid the blossom'd weed
 For ripening fruit or unctuous seed;
 Or chase the worm, the gnat, the fly,
 Entor'd through the earth and sky.

But where is now the INSTINCTIVE CARE,
 Which bade the anxious parent dare
 Seclusion, hunger, toil, fatigue?
 'Tis GONE: unless the nuptial league
 Renew'd incite her to pursue
 Her late solitudes anew; 1080
 Again seclusion, toil embrace,
 Fatigue, and hunger, for a race,
 Which, like the former, left alone,
 Disown'd itself, shall soon disown

The tie parental, nor retain
 Remembrance of that pristine chain,
 Completely rent, as if no share
 They witness'd of parental care.

Thus nature prompts them to fulfil
 The Universal Parent's will
 By instinct's powerful voice, design'd
 To propagate and keep the kind
 In being: but, that end attain'd,
 For objects, which triumphant reign'd
 Of late, affection's sluices close;
 Of those forgot, forgetting those,
 On whom, concenter'd in the nest,
 Their little world appear'd to rest.

1090

How DIFFERENT from the MORAL sense,
 With reason link'd, which Providence
 Has with the NATURAL feelings mix'd
 Of kindred tenderness; and fix'd
 In man, to teach the human heart
 The filial and parental part!

1100

Hence of the PARENT for the CHILD
 AFFECTIONS holy, undefil'd
 By aught of earthy mixture reign:
 Hence of the duteous CHILD again
 Kind FEELINGS^o animate the breast,
 And on the honour'd PARENT rest:
 Not soon to languish and decay
 With helpless childhood's early day!
 But still, in every gradual stage
 Of life's eventful pilgrimage,

1110

Matur'd, and moulded to the form
Of mutual friendship, bright and warm,
In both reigns sympathy benign :
In each with its peculiar sign,
Here of superior goodness kind,
There with respectful deference join'd ; 1120
As best beseems the several spheres
Of greener and maturer years ;
As best, what best each several name
Of parent and of child may claim.

Nor fairer boon does God bestow,
To HEIGHTEN BLISS, and SOFTEN WOE,
Than when in mutual friendship's bands,
Attemper'd by his own commands,
The mother with her daughters runs
Her course, the father with his sons : 1130
And all the grateful interchange
Of kindness, suited to their range
Reciprocal of duty, prove,
A happy family of love ;
Love, which enlivens all the year,
Can, every passing season cheer
With joy that feels not time's decay,
And make of every month a MAY ! 1138

J U N E.

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J U N E.

FAREWELL, delightful MAY, FAREWELL !
Thy breath, thy own sweet lily's smell ;
Thy smile, the wavy sea serene ;
Thy robe, the meadow's emerald green
Broider'd before, behind, with flowers,
Work'd by the ever-busy Hours ;
Thou youngest daughter of the Spring,
Who tarried but thy charms to bring
To perfectness ; and, that complete,
With thee the fairest and most sweet 10
Of all her race, is past away ;
Farewell to thee delicious May !

But WELCOME, of the Summer Sun
Bright offspring ! WELCOME, glorious JUNE,
Heir to fair May's relinquish'd place !
If hers the lovely female grace
In MEDICEAN statue shown ;
No less, bright Month, is all thy own
The manly beauty of the year,
Like the fam'd god of BELVIDERE : 20
If hers the winning softness bland,
Thine is the step of high command ;
The flamelike mantle loosely flung,
And down thy half-clad shoulders hung ;
The bow, and arrow's golden flight ;
And proud to mark their piercing might

The sparkling eye severe, and glow
Irradiate of the upright brow.

I know not if Rome's Founder King
Invented, as her poets sing, 30
The names of MAY and JUNE to grace
Her MAJOR and her JUNIOR race.
But well meseems by just desert
Confest might JUNE his name assert,
As index of the YOUTHFUL prime
And vigour of that radiant time.

For now bright SUMMER has begun
Confirm'd his king-like course to run:
And the grim Winter, loth to yield
To Spring's mild sway the foughten field, 40
And ever forward to pursue
The strife with shafts of war anew,
With hail, and storm, and biting frost;
At length compell'd, the battle lost
Confessing, to the caves of night
Withdraws his implements of fight,
Submissive to the ardent noon
Of SUMMER, and his first-born JUNE.

How glorious is yon VAULTED DOME!
Far as the excursive eye can roam, 50
From that deep azure overhead
To where the earth's wide girdle spread
Around us terminates the view,
With paler and yet paler blue;
No spot pollutes the pure serene:
Or if a transient spot be seen

Of scatter'd vapour here and there,
 Ascending through the calm clear air,
 Soon fades it from the following sight,
 And melting joins the abyss of light. ' 60

Then as the SUN draws near his REST
 Of glory, 'twixt the north and west,
 How chang'd is that horizon pale!
 How from behind the filmy veil
 Looks forth the setting orb of gold!
 And ere the twilight dim infold
 The face of things, what tints are seen,
 Of brilliant yellow, purple, green,
 Flooding the sky with liquid gleams!
 Thence mounting upward, how the streams 70
 On some small cloud, if cloud appear,
 Scarce moving through the concave sphere,
 Cast their reflection's vivid glow;
 Illumining the skirts below
 With gold and purple hues array'd,
 The parts superior veil'd in shade!

Then what a TWILIGHT girdles round
 (For night is none) heaven's northern bound!

O'ermantling that wide vault on high,
 The dark deep azure of the sky, 80
 Creeps gently o'er the southern pole
 A shadow thin! but from the goal,
 Where yon bright track afar reveals
 The fiery sun's yet lingering wheels,
 Flushes of rich warm colouring tinge
 The horizon with a gorgeous fringe
 Of saffron melting into blue:
 Till by degrees that saffron hue,

Paling its gorgeous tissue bright,
 Fades to a band of lucid white, 90
 Of lucid white a moving zone;
 Which, in its brilliance, circles on,
 And on still circles, stealing forth
 Towards, beyond, the midmost north:
 And then, as circling on it goes,
 More bright that lucid whiteness grows,
 More bright and brighter: till again
 With colours of a richer grain
 Its course it tinges; and at last
 The eastward journey halfway past, 100
 With new-sown light the skies are spread;
 And o'er the glowing mountain's head,
 Clear'd of its veil of shadows dim,
 The rising sun his bended rim
 At first, and then is seen unfold
 Step after step, his orb of gold,
 That "all the orient with delight
 Laughs to behold that glorious sight*."

Such whiteness through the summer night,
 Scarce widow'd of the orb of light, 110
 As wheeling near at hand he flings
 The effluence from his radiant wings
 Up through the twilight's bounded pale,
 Our BRITAIN'S NORTHERN DWELLERS hail.
 And oft in MAY and pleasant JUNE,
 When the still night approach'd her noon,
 I've stol'n an hour from welcome sleep,
 To see that lucid whiteness creep

Rounding the northern hemisphere ;
 So delicately soft and clear, 120
 No hues that light the splendid day
 Such clearness, softness, can display,
 As that pale-tinctur'd gleam that now
 A chaplet hangs on darkness' brow,
 Still narrowing till the noon of night,
 And widening with the approaching light.

But peer or not that fillet white ;—
 (For briefer still, less broad and bright,
 It shows, as from the pole sublime
 Is distant each successive clime, 130
 Till London scarce the pallid zone
 Sees breaking on the curtain thrown
 Continuous o'er her midnight vault ;—)
 Yet who that will his mind exalt
 From the dull earth, and lift his eyes
 To gaze on summer's sun-bright skies,
 Can fail to bless that glorious globe,
 What time he first begins to robe,
 Forth issuing from his bridegroom tent,
 The golden-gleaming firmament ; 140
 Or o'er his widest, loftiest arch,
 Holds through mid heav'n his stately march,
 To plant on yon solstitial height,
 Of gold inwove and purple light,
 His banner's floating folds, and leave
 Its splendour on the waning eve ?
 'Tis said the HEATHEN OLD, with mind
 To God's eternal GODHEAD blind,

And all unconscious of the might
 Which spoke not to his ears or sight; 150
 When on the eastern mountain gray
 He saw the golden ORB OF DAY
 Prepar'd his burning wheels to roll,
 Acknowledg'd him the eye and soul
 Supreme of this diurnal sphere;
 Press'd on his lips in awful fear
 His hand*, and brow adoring bow'd
 In worship of the PRESENT GOD.
 And surely, if created thing
 Inanimate might seem the King 160
 Of heav'n above, and earth below;
 No likelier sway could nature know,
 Than his, who on his peerless tower
 Seems, like a god, with sovereign power
 To rule each sublunary form;
 With grace to clothe, with life to warm;
 In heav'n o'er each diminish'd light
 Bear empire with unrivall'd might,
 And earth's dark caverns search and try
 With lustre of his piercing eye. 170

But what's the sun, with strength array'd
 And majesty, to HIM who MADE
 And holds him in his daily course?
 If *his* be vigour, what's the force
 Which form'd him and preserves him strong?
 If majesty to *him* belong,
 What must that MIGHTIER BEING be,
 Who robed him thus with majesty;

* Job xxxi. 27.

And gave him empire ; and alone
 Supports him on his azure throne ? 180
 In all creation's works, the source
 Alone of beauty and of force,
 He forms his creatures as they are,
 For greatness strong, for beauty fair ;
 But each how infinitely less
 Than his stupendous perfectness !
 Yet all meanwhile, the more they show
 Of grace and strength, the more to know
 They lead us by authentick sign,
 Of his creative power divine ; 190
 The more to see Him, and the more,
 Though from afar, his steps adore ! •

Teems now with visions of delight-
 Each PERIOD of the day and night !

How goodly is the HOUR OF PRIME !
 When the great SUN begins to climb
 His steepest passage up the sky :
 On the tall rock and summit high
 Of crested grove his orient beams
 First fall, and kiss with golden gleams 200
 The face that eastward courts his smile.
 But on the half-lit LAWN the while
 Lies the broad shade of hill or tree.
 And brooding o'er the scarce seen SEA
 Hang fleecy vapours dim, and hide
 The misty mountain's bordering side.

Then in unnumber'd myriads born
 The dew-drops from the womb of morn

On grass or cornfield, leaf and spray,
Touch'd by the sun's resplendent ray 210
Shine with the rainbow's braided dyes.

The herald LARK, who told his rise
Approaching, in mid air the songs
Of gratulation sweet prolongs ;
Join'd with the crow of VILLAGE CROCK,
Who bids good morrow to his flock ;
And warns the BLACKBIRD and the THRUSH :

Who from tall tree or lowly bush
Erewhile with interrupted lay
Began to greet the morning gray ; 220

And now more loud and blithe again
Take up the yet unfinished strain
With whistle of the mellow bill,
Or varied chant's protracted trill :

And calls on many a songster more ;
The REDBREAST, who, if not before,
Now fails not with the sun to wake,
And sing his carol from the brake ;
The GOLDFINCH with his spritely note ;

The LINNET's many-mingled throat ; 230

The BLACK-CAP from the orchard tree
With wild and merry minstrelsy ;
While from beneath the straw-built shed,
Or perch'd upon the rooftree's head,
The SWALLOW prunes her for the flight,
And twittering hails the welcome light.

Is it the HYMN of grateful PRAISE,
That these delightful chanter's raise,
As, with one voice and one concert,
The temple of the firmament

Their loud and joyous anthems thrill?
 Howe'er it be, their songs may fill
 With RIVALRY the heart of MAN,
 And prompt the thought; "if, as they can,
 These little birds their voices swell,
 And the Creator's glory tell,
 Who gives them voice and power of song;
 How fits it *them*, to whom belong
 Reason with voice conjoin'd, and skill,
 And knowledge of their Maker's will, 250
 Stamp'd with his own authentick seal,
 A mind to think, a heart to feel;—
 How fits it *them* the voice to raise,
 Skill, reason, knowledge, to his praise:
 With thinking mind, and feeling heart,
 To wake and waking bear their part
 In those blithe concerts of the skies;
 Nor, while to God the anthems rise
 Of feather'd chanters, leave unsung
 His glory by the human tongue!" 260

And goodly now the NOONTIDE HOUR!
 When from his high meridian tower
 The sun looks down in majesty:
 What time about the grassy lea
 The GOATSBEARD, prompt his rise to hail
 With broad expanded disk, in veil
 Close mantling wraps its yellow head,
 And "goes," as peasants say, "to bed;"
 While their bright eyes amid the sand
 The SCARLET PIMPERNELLS expand, 270

"The poor man's weather-glass," to gaze
Enamour'd on the solar rays.

'Tis pleasant then to sit at ease
In the deep shade of forest trees,
And note the various tints of green
That grace the full-leaf'd woodland scene;
And scent in that o'erarching bower
The LIME-TREE'S pale and fragrant flower;
And see the sun, who in his pride
Has now the sparkling dewdrops dried 280
Which on their morning branches hung,
Scarce weave the chequering boughs among
His downright light; where free from fear,
The slim and lofty-antler'd DEER,
Attendant on their fallow DOES,
Seek the cool shelter's calm repose,
Replenish'd with the morning food;
And in their native neighbourhood
March stately through the opening glade,
Or crowding haunt the greenwood shade. 290

'Tis pleasant, when the balmy gale
Breathes freshly o'er the cultur'd vale,
And mitigates the burning heat;
To issue from that woodland seat,
And watch the cooling BREEZES pass
Above the deep and blossom'd GRASS;
Which waving, as the zephyr blows,
Its colours to the sun-beam shows,
Wave after wave of mingled die,
Of light and brown alternately; 300

And bends and lifts the elastick head
As from the fairy's viewless tread.

'Tis pleasant, o'er the bladed field,
Ere the round stalk unclosing yield
The spike that swells the tumid sheath,
To watch the zephyr's trembling breath.
The bladed field inclining plays
And glistens in the sunny blaze,
As with metallick splendour bright:
That scarce a more refulgent light
Beams from yon azure mirrour sheen,
Than from the wavy cornfield green.

310

'Tis pleasant where the winged fern
Half hides from view the mountain BOURN.
Beside the limpid WATER'S FALL
To ponder: here with ceaseless brawl
Down the rough rock the torrent leaps;
There gliding smooth the runnel creeps
Through the green banks its tinkling way.
On the rough rock the dashing spray
Breathes coolness, and the very sound
Flings a delicious freshness round;
Nor less, faint tinkling as it flows,
The scarce-heard runnel courts repose.

320

But where, the sloping bed beyond,
Expanded in a level POND
The gather'd waters sleep; you see,
Collected from the bordering lea,
The KINE a cooling refuge seek.
Here on the grass, with aspect meek,
Chewing the pleasant cud they lie:
There in the liquid basin nigh,

330

Regardless of their verdant food,
Knee-deep within the circling flood,
Like sculptur'd forms they stand : or sip,
With bended neck and curling lip,
The gently rippling wave : or try,
From their vex'd sides the stinging fly
With lash of well-aim'd tail to chase ;
Lash'd from their sides, returns apace 340
Unharm'd the frequent fly, and brings
Fresh venom in its piercing stings ;
Nor heeds the stamp of restless hoof,
Causing the turbid wave aloof
In widely circling rings to spread ;
Nor tossing of the horned head
Aloft in furious menace thrown,
Nor bellowing fierce nor plaintive moan.

'Tis pleasant on the steep hill side,
Where lies in view the prospect wide 350
Of cultur'd farm, with interchange
Of tilth and pasture, cot and grange,
At ease the careless limbs to stretch
Beneath the broad o'erarching beech ;
And, lighted by the sky serene,
Mark the full HAYFIELD'S varied scene.

Here, as the swarthy MOWERS pass
Slow through the tall and russet grass,
In marshall'd rank, from side to side,
With circling stroke and measur'd stride, 360
Before the scythe's wide sweeping sway
The russet meadow's tall array

Falls, and the bristly surface strows
With the brown swathe's successive rows.

Ah, take they heed, nor on her nest
The PARTRIDGE ill-secur'd molest!
Deep in the grass behold her sit;
Reluctant from her couch to flit,
Though the stout mower's whistling blade
Incautious her abode invade, 370
And threaten, 'mid the falling heap,
Away herself and brood to sweep!

Rous'd from her humble pallet, mark!
Up starts alarm'd the brooding LARK:
And round and round her dwelling flies
With fluttering wings and plaintive cries.

And, hark! with oft repeated wail,
Heard but not seen, the restless RAIL
For her low home forbearance begs!
Scarce issued from the ruptur'd eggs, 380
Swift through the scatter'd morning dew
The young their fleeting dam pursue.
In pity spare them! Lest trepann'd,
Though cherish'd by your fondling hand,
Bereav'd the captive birds decline,
And for their dam and freedom pine! —

Here the blithe HAMLET's gather'd THROG,
With toothed rake and forked prong,
Maidens and boys, in order due
The mower's ridgy track pursue; 390
Turn with just care the tedded hay
Alternate to the mellowing ray;
Or loosely o'er the sunny mead
The scatter'd rows promiscuous spread;

Or what may fill the rounded lap
 In smaller heaps collected wrap ;
 Or in more broad and loftier piles
 Build the rich produce: while with smiles
 At hand the joyous FARMER eyes,
 Safe from the assault of lowering skies, 400
 O'er the throng'd field to stature grown
 Complete the haycock's tawny cone.

And there the toiling horses strain
 Slowly to move the ponderous WAIN.
 From pile to pile the slow wain goes:—
 And still at each more lofty grows,
 While the stout swains below supply
 Fresh fardels to the swains on high,
 Heaps upon heaps, the grassy load:
 Thence, lumbering o'er the homeward road, 410
 It swells, adorn'd with trophied bough,
 The rick compact, or treasur'd mow.

Nor want there objects of delight,
 To charm, together with the sight,
 The ear and smell: of peerless SCENT
 The new-cut herbage redolent,
 Chief from the stem of VERNAL GRASS,
 Confest for sweetness to surpass
 The woodruff's Eden-blowing breath ;
 And sweeping through the yielding swathe 420
 With rushing SOUND, or the shrill tone
 Re-echoing of the sharpening hone
 Now and again, the mower's scythe ;
 The village maiden's carol blithe ;
 The village story circling round ;
 And shout, and laughter's jocund sound,

And, join'd to voice of guiding swain,
The rumbling of the loaded wain.

Nor wants there, what may well engage
The mind reflecting; if, a page 430
Of nature's book here open thrown,
We wish by care to make our own
Its rich contents; and scrutinise
Discreetly with BOTANICK eyes
The CLOVER's many-cluster'd head
Of winged blossoms, white or red:
And, each according to his kind,
The grassy tribes by God design'd
For use of bird, of beast, of man,
Unmark'd by casual glance. But scan. 440
Ascending from the fibrous root,
Joint after joint, the juicy shoot,
The stalk, the leaf, the waving plume,
The sheltering husk, the fruitful bloom,
And last the swelling seed; and say,
Though little deck'd by colours gay,
If plainer sample, or more fair,
Of pow'r, contrivance, wisdom, care,
Appeal to man's considerate sense,
And, ruling all, benevolence, 450
Than nature's lowliest children yield,
The grass and herbage of the field.

'Tis pleasant on the upland crown,
Or slope side of the russet down,
Where tracks of pointed feet indent,
Line above line, the steep ascent,

To see the SHEEP gregarious pass
 Close-serried in a moving mass
 Of whiteness like the drifted snow.
 WASH'D in the cleansing pool below, 460
 No more a spoil to tangling thorn
 Or bramble, by the shearer snorn
 With skilfull eye and motion true,
 The barn their whiten'd fleeces strew.
 So, quick of step, with noisy bleat,
 And trampling of the cloven feet,
 Compact they hill-ward mount, and range
 The well-known upland haunt. Though strange
 At first, nor each its fellow knows,
 Stript of their garb, that oft by blows 470
 And butting of the hostile head
 The shepherd mourns some favourite dead.
 Now re-assur'd, and following well
 The tinkling of the wonted bell,
 The leader's sign, their way they wend
 Contented. On their course attend
 The faithful SWAIN, their guard and guide ;
 Nor less the faithful DOG beside,
 With sense akin to reason fraught,
 And ever prompt with watchful thought, 480
 If heedless straggler from the way
 Or loitering lag, or rambling stray,
 To seek and lead the waif aright
 With warning bark, and fangless bite.

Say, shall we mount the HILL, and note
 The shepherd plant his wattled COTE,
 Prepar'd in that protecting hold
 The congregated flock to fold

At evening due? The healthful gale,
 The prospect of the extended vale, 490
 The village group, the Saxon tower,
 The village pastor's pleasant bower,
 And seen far off the sparkling sea,
 (Ah, BURITON, my thoughts on thee,
 Returning dwell!) will well repay
 The toil, if toilsome be the way.
 And prest beneath the climbing feet,
 The WILD THYME there its fragrance sweet,
 As with the SQUINCEY's lilac crown
 It creeps along the chalky down, 500
 Will yield to gratify the smell.
 And, past philosophy to tell
 The occasion, if from force it flow
 Electrick, or the soil below,
 Or starlings there have left imprest
 Strange symptoms of their place of rest;
 Whate'er the cause, the turf-clad height
 Inlaid will gratify the sight,
 In form of many a dark green round
 Imprinted on the lighter ground, 510
 Where the short sward the MUSHROOMS gem
 With flatten'd head and upright stem,
 And scatter'd thick the PUFF-BALL springs;
 And peasants call them "FAIRY RINGS."
 For there, 'twas thought, the tiny throng,
 With "roundel and with fairy song*,"
 Held their light revels on the green,
 In rings about their elfin queen:

* Shakespeare; *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

There left their footsteps, as they trod,
 Indented on the sunken sod ; 520
 Nor fail'd at times their "orbs" anew
 To water with refreshing "dew."

Strange passion of the human mind !
 Which, impotent a cause to find
 For things that meet the wondering sight,
 To some unseen and secret might
 Refers them, and invents a name,
 Which those mysterious works may claim.
 Hence FAIRIES, genii, goblin sprites,
 The dreaming fancy's fond delights ! 530
 As if whate'er we hear or see,
 Wrapt in a cloud of mystery,
 That our pent vision seeks in vain
 The hidden mystery to explain,
 Were past the scope of nature's laws,
 And lack'd a preternatural cause !

Strange that such passion still should blind,
 As blind it does, the human mind,
 Despite of reason's beams, despite
 The fulness of celestial light ! 540
 That CHRISTIANS still, in darkling dream
 Of heathen ignorance, should deem,
 That still the FAIRIES dance and sing
 All sportive in the moon-light ring,
 On the green mountain's solitude :
 Or fitful, in their angry mood,
 If rash unthinking mortal chance
 To name their name, with noxious glance
 Vindictive of the eye malign
 Mark him aslant ; or on his kine 550

Their air-shot bolts unpitying cast,
 And smite them with the blighting blast!

And goodly now the hour of EVE!
When the great sun begins to leave,
Or just has left, his bright career;
And sailing through the fading sphere,
Pale TWILIGHT draws of sober hue,
With fingers soft and dipt in dew,
O'er nature's face a shadowy veil.
The FLOWERS a sweeter scent exhale;
And misty MEADS around convey
More fresh the fume of new-mown hay.

Mark you the crowds on yonder stream?
'Tis there the filmy MAYFLIES gleam
Ephemeral: of shortest date
'Mong living things their winged state;
Which first the western sunbeam brings
To life: and if their buoyant wings
So long the eager TROUT defy,
Before the noon of night they die. 570
But what to an eternal age
Is man's most lengthen'd pilgrimage?
Still with rapacious foes at strife,
A fleeting Mayfly's six hours' life.

Heard you from yon dark alley come
 The CHAFFER's deep and drowsy hum?
 Not musical: but apt to find
 * A welcome in the dreamy mind
 Of lonely bard, tho' dearly paid
 By ravage of the greenwood shade,

580

Stript of its tender foliage fair,
And left with fibrous network bare.

To greet her lover, through the dark
The GLOWWORM shows her brilliant spark,
Enlightening, till the midnight shade,
On the dim bank each neighbouring blade :
Thence borrow'd by the playful boy
To grace his hat, the gem-like toy
Shines with a liquid radiance bright ;
As emerald green, or diamond white, 590
Which with imperial splendour deck
The highborn female's marble neck.

And see from solitary bower,
In barn or ancient hallowed tower,
The FLAME-BRIGHT OWL comes forth to feed !
Lo, as he skirts the hedge-girt mead,
Intent to seize and bear away
The lurking mouse, his nestlings' prey,
Along he steals with noiseless flight :
But oft his waving pinions white, 600
Seen dimly, and sepulchral skreec'h
From the dark wood of oak or beech,
Give to the eye and startled ear
FANCIES of fearful SPECTRES drear.
On the degraded mind of yore
Such empire SUPERSTITION bore ;
Nor yet extinct have past away
The traces of her gloomy sway !
When once enslav'd, how slight a cause
The mind to closer bondage draws ; 610
That common sights, and harmless, change
To baneful signs and visions strange ;

And nature's daily round presents
Omens of ill, and dire portents !

The little SONGSTERS by DEGREES
Are roosting in their leafy trees,
Or roof-built mansions, one by one,
Soon as their evening orison,
Or what in fancy's pleasing dream
Their evening orison may seem, 620
Is chanted ! Save that voice is heard
Now and again of wakeful bird
Low twittering, ere they sink to rest :
Of all the latest and the best,
Whose warble with the evening ends,
His varied notes the THROSTLE blends :
Unless perchance on balanc'd wings
High in mid air the WOODLARK sings,
And on the nightfall's precincts late
Soothes with sweet lay his brooding mate : 630
Or on fleet wing with sharp shrill cry
The SWALLOW wheels yet sleepless by,
Still gathering with parental zeal
Her helpless nursling's evening meal.

How goodly too the hour of NIGHT !
When the great sun from mortal sight
Is vanish'd ; and the EVENING STAR,
Attendant on his fiery car,
Gives signal to the HEAVENLY HOST.

‘ They, each in order due, as most 640
Resplendent, to the sign reply.
But of the host, which now on high

Each after each successive ope
 Their watch towers in the azure cope,
 Nor EAGLE's breast, nor SCORPION's sting,
 Nor the bright LYRE with golden string,
 Eastward; nor verging to the west,
 The LION's heart, ARCTURUS' crest,
 Nor that SPIKE-BEARING MAIDEN shines,
 Nor fairest of the Zenith signs, 650
 The radiant CHAPLET of the NORTH,
 Like HESPER: till the MOON walk forth
 In brightness, heav'n's unrivall'd Queen,
 All silver, through the blue serene,
 And dim each lesser light, and throw
 O'er the green earth her pall of snow.

And now the sweet love-dittied tale,
 By others stopt, the NIGHTINGALE
 Takes up, nor all the midnight long
 Surreases the thick-warbled song: 660
 Alone; unless the restless C'RAKE
 The cornfield's placid stillness break,
 Untuneful; or the TAWNY OWL
 Fortb from the branching fir-wood prowl,
 And with harsh scream or clamorous hoot
 Alarm the pigeon's crowded cote;
 Or the loud Cuckoo rambling round
 His still repeated call resound;
 Or in the reeds or tufted sedge,
 From marsh or river's moonlight edge, 670
 The mimick numbers wildly float,
 Pour'd from the wakeful SEDGE-BIRD's throat.
 Till, not long past the noon of night,
 Awake before the awaken'd light,

The BIRDS of DAY resume the strain,
 And hail the lovely dawn again.
 And waken'd, by that lovely dawn,
 In bowery brake or open lawn,
 And bathed with drops of freshening dew,
 The PLANTS and FLOW'RS breathe forth anew 630
 Their incense through the morning skies;
 And with the choral symphonies
 Of chanting birds unite to raise
 Their silent sacrifice of praise.
 O ever be such union mine!
 Thus each successive morn to join
 With anthem, as of woodland bowers,
 The fragrant offering of the flowers;
 Of grateful praise the VOCAL part
 With the still incense of the HEART! 690

Of essence strong, in action rife,
 Is still the PRINCIPLE of LIFE,
 Which circulates through every vein
 Of nature's VEGETABLE reign:
 Which gives to June the part to play
 Of step-sire to the race of May;
 Which gives the summertide to bring
 To forwardness the flow'rs of spring;
 To fit the vernal blossom'd shoot
 For ripeness in the autumnal fruit; 700
 And the bright store already blown
 Augment with treasures of its own.

For many an autumn FRUIT is now
 Maturing on the summer bough,

Which springtide in her genial hour
 Invested with the embryo flower.
 And many a later FLOWER, decreed
 To ripe its fruit, and yield its seed,
 Is now withal by nature boon
 Put forth to grace the sunny JUNE. 710

Spring is the season deem'd of flowers :
 And May by common suffrage showers
 Most largely on the smiling earth
 The blooming year's prolifick birth.
 And true it is, with greater show
 Does May of vernal beauty blow,
 Chief in the copse's berried race,
 The orchard's wealth, the shrubbery's grace.
 That scarce the least instructed eye
 Could pass her charms unnoticed by. 720
 Yet he, who hies him forth intent
 To ramble, and, where'er besprent,
 Uncultur'd nature's tribes explore,
 And add to his botanick store ;
 Will find, perhaps, though largely May
 Enrich'd him, still a LARGER prey
 Will JUNE's unsparing month confer,
 To swell his floral calendar.

Would you, prepar'd at your command,
 The Muse should lead you by the hand, 730
 Where JUNE's fresh opening FLOW'RS reside?
 Unwilling else, lest not allied
 To hers, your taste perchance may deem
 Unkindly of her favour'd theme ;
 Yet, if you think not scorn, a few
 She'll pluck and offer to your view,

Not all in crowd promiscuous thrown,
 But such as 'praise peculiar own,
 For curious SHAPE, or COLOURS fair,
 Or USE, or PRESENCE strange and rare. 740
 For who would sing the flow'rs of June,
 Though from gray morn to blazing noon,
 From blazing noon to dewy eve,
 The chaplet of his song he weave,
 Would find the summer daylight fail,
 And leave half told the pleasing tale.

And see at hand the blossom'd GRASS,
 Triandrous: too profuse a class
 For subject of poetick pen;
 Yet well do they deserve the ken 750
 Intent of microscopick eye,
 Their structure, parts, and form to spy,
 Each kind and sort. But passing these,
 Well boots it the thick-mantled LEAS
 To traverse: if boon nature grant
 To crop the insect-seeming plant
 The vegetable BEE; or nigh
 Of kin, the long-horn'd BUTTERFLY,
 White, or his brother purple pale,
 Scenting alike the evening gale: 760
 The SATYR-FLOW'ER, the pride of Kent,
 Of lizard form, and goat-like scent;
 Scarce found, the PURPLE MEADOW-SAGE,
 Unless on floral pilgrimage
 Your steps fair SURREY's leas explore,
 Or the SOUTH SAXON's lowly shore;

With rounded leaves of finest green,
 The MANTLE of our LADY-QUEEN ;
 And COXCUMBS, whose tall stems produce
 Light empty heads of little use. 770

Then will the CORN or PASTUR'D FIELD
 The SCABIOUS' purple tussocks yield ;
 Pink CENTORY ; with radiate head
 Blue CORNFLOW'R ; sleepy POPPY red :
 MADDER with azure stars beset ;
 Tall COCKLE's purple coronet ;
 Blue LARKSPUR's dragon lip, the pride
 Of hills by GRANTA's classick side ;
 The climbing SNAKEWEED, apt to roam ;
 The PHEASANT'S EYE ; the SHEPHERD'S COMB ; 780
 GREENWEED, whose bright and yellow die
 Shines peerless in the clothier's eye ;
 And LIMEWORT's* stem, with clammy hair
 Beset, the fly's tenacious snare,
 Our southern boast, whence northward borne
 Its flow'rs the trim parterre adorn.

Or would you deign, as who that woos
 Boon nature's favours, would refuse
 The dusty PATHWAY-SIDE to try
 Or RUBBISH HEAP ? With bright blue eye 790
 Your pains the BUGLOSS will repay ;
 And fam'd for driving care away,
 Dipt in a broader, brighter blue,
 Rough BORAGE ; and with mingled hue
 Of purple, blue, and brilliant red,
 Tho' spurn'd beneath the passing tread,

Prickly and harsh, with tints that pass
 The garden's pride, the VIPER GRASS.
 With yellow blooms on downy cone,
 Part spread, and part as yet unblown, 800
 Tall MULLEIN; and the plant, that breaks
 Its paler red with darker streaks,
 The MALLOW shall repay your pains:
 HOUNDSTONGUE; and laced with purple veins
 Fair to the sight, but by the smell
 Unpriz'd, the HENBANE's straw-ting'd bell
 With danger pregnant. But more full
 Of danger, dark of hue, and dull
 Of aspect, near with purple flowers
 Perchance the DEADLY NIGHTSHADE lowers. 810
 Look, if you will: but ah, beware,
 Nor lur'd by specious beauty dare
 To taste the poisonous berry fell!
 Vain were each magick charm and spell,
 Of old by white-robed DRUID tried,
 With VERVAIN bough that blooms beside;
 Vain were each salutary root,
 Each pungent juice, emetick fruit,
 To break the lulling stupor deep,
 And rouse you from that mortal sleep! 820

Along the FIELD'S or MEADOW'S EDGE,
 Mix'd with the hawthorn's verdant HEDGE,
 Where flaunts the HONEYSUCKLE gay
 Wak'd by the earlier breath of MAY,
 Their breasts to warmer JUNE disclose
 The SWEET-BRIAR and the wilding ROSE,
That darker, *this* of hue more pale,
 Each crimson; nor does Britain hail

A rival flower, where blended meet
 A form more fair, a smell more sweet. 830
 There of white flowers the CORNEL red
 Puts forth his flat and tufted head;
 And PRIVET singly his, between
 His new-sprung foliage evergreen.
 With tendrils of the WILDING VINE
 The DEWBERRY and BRAMBLE twine;
 And slender BRYONY that weaves
 His pale green flow'rs and glossy leaves
 Aloft in smooth and lithe festoons;
 And crown'd compact with yellow cones 840
 'Mid purple petals dropt with green,
 The WOODY NIGHTSHADE climbs between:
 To that fell plant of poisonous fame
 In kind unlike, though like in name;
 Akin to Erin's mealy root,
 And oft its sweet and bitter shoot
 Has science sought, nor sought in vain,
 To cleanse the blood and soften pain.

And there beneath perchance you'll find,
 Still like in name, unlike in kind, 850
 Distinguish'd that of old its part
 It bore in NECROMANTICK art,
 Half-veil'd another NIGHTSHADE peep:
 And there the LADIES' BEDSTRAW creep
 With countless store of starlike eyes,
 Yellow or white: and whence arise
 By care to better nature grown,
 Diffuse with umbellated crown,
 Sweet CHERVIL's cottage-valued weed,
 And CORIANDER's spicy seed; 860

The garden's culinary crop,
 CARROT and PARSNEP: with the HOP,
 Which here his barren blossom leads,
 The fruitful there: above the weeds,
 With purple speck'd their bloom of gold,
 Their leaves with lucid spots, of old
 Effectual deem'd to drive to flight
 Or demon foul, or phantom sprite;
 More apt the drop distill'd to tinge
 With essence from that purple fringe, 870
 Graced with the name of good SAINT JOHN;
 Of Britain's tribes the only one,
 With anthers manifold indued,
 Link'd in a threefold brotherhood.

See on the cultur'd garden's bound,
 Or antique battlemented mound
 Which girds some castled steep aloof,
 Or lowly peasant's peaceful roof,
 The STONECROP spreads a mantle bright,
 Like cloth of gold, or silver white, 880
 Powder'd with spots of garnet red:
 SNAP-DRAGON tall, with roseate head,
 And yellow mouth's elastick spring:
 Flesh-tinted PINKS, whose petals fling,
 Still more, when train'd to higher powers
 Among the garden's fairest flowers,
 Sweet fragrance on the enamour'd gale:
 And NAVELWORT, of yellow pale,
 Bell-blossom'd; and more rare and tall,
 Its brother plant, that crowns the wall 890
 With golden spike erect, the boast
 Of spacious Yorkshire's western coast.

And see of favour'd York the child,
 Or Derby's mountain THICKETS wild,
 The PLANT, not strange to Scottish skies,
 Whose leafits, LADDER-LIKE, arise,
 Pointing to azure vaults above,
 The PATRIARCH'S dream, in southern grove
 Unfrequent. Nor does southern wood
 Put forth like Alpine solitude 900
 Of northern fells, Hebridean isles,
 Or Scotia's bosky glens, the styles
 Produc'd, their bended chives between,
 And pear-like leaves of WINTERGREEN:
 The southern wood to pay your care
 More likely, if you follow there
 The spiky whirls of Cow-WHEAT drest
 With gold and purple mingled crest:
 Or, springing from the root-heav'd ground,
 That parasitick stranger found 910
 Within the pine or beechwood shade,
 The YELLOW BIRDSNEST, through the glade
 Breathing from many a ripen'd bell
 The vernal PRIMROSE' fragrant SMELL.

With crowds of bell-like blossoms graced,
 And linear leaves, the barren WASTE
 Displays its varied HEATHS, and glows
 With blaze of purple, pink, and rose.

Its disk of white on upland wolds
 The pretty SAXIFRAGE unfolds, 920
 With lucid spots of crimson pied,
 Thence brought, and hail'd the CITY'S PRIDE.
 And yellow ROSEROOT yields its smell
 From Cambrian crag, or Cumbrian fell,

Or Rachlin's lone basaltic isle:
 Nor, though more rare, from Snowdon's pile
 The slender MOUNTAIN SAFFRON fails,
 Or rough Lynn Idwel's Alpine vales.

Where the SALT MARSH the surges lave,
 With leaves that match the beryll wave 930
 For greenness, see, of wholesome juice
 The little SALTWORT's stem profuse
 Present its flow'rs of roseate hue:
 With ROCKET's spikes of pinkish blue,
 On zigzag stalk deform'd; and bright
 Of stem, the SANDWORT's florets white:
 And that, which rustick neatness leads
 Round the trim garden's walks and beds,
 Whose globelike tufts of blossoms throw
 O'er the green marsh a rosy glow, 940
 Nor less, where Alpine regions lift
 Their misty tops, the hardy THRIFT,

In grassy MOOR, or boggy FEN,
 Or moss-grown DITCHES putrid pen,
 Where the dull stagnant waters dwell,
 Low lurks the CHIAFFWEED PIMPERNEL:
 So coy, the light its blossoms shun,
 Till open'd by the fiery sun;
 So low of stature, that the eye
 Can scarce its tiny form descry. 950
 There named from her, whom fables feign'd
 On the lone rock all friendless chain'd
 The monster's fierce assault to bide;
 A lovely plant 'mid desert wide,
 ANDROMEDA, so will'd the SWEDE;
 With them, to whom for preference plead

Transmissive terms their native claim,
 WILD ROSEMARY its homelier name,
 Like one who hangs the head and grieves.
 There in the pool its winged leaves 960
 Submerged, with lilac flow'rs beset
 Above, the WATER VIOLET:

MARSH CINQUEFOIL, all of purple deep,
 Cup, anthers, flow'r: his nectaried lip,
 And petals green, with yellow line
 And purple streak'd, HELLEBORINE:
 And that STRANGE PLANT of curious power,
 Though scarce its double-anther'd flower,
 Howe'er your careful search pursue
 The annual bloom, will glad your view; 970
 The plant that from its foliage cleft
 Fresh foliage breeds, to right, to left,
 Which still increases more and more,
 Prolifick like the first; till o'er
 The liquid glass a mantling coat
 Of bright continuous verdure float,
 And the smooth pool the semblance wear
 Transform'd of greensward fresh and fair.

But where the LIVING WATERS glide,
 'Bathing the summer flow'rs beside, 980
 Behold the lucid PONDWEED show
 Its dark green spike above; below
 The swelling stalk and wavy leaves
 The river's circling breast receives.
 There may the purple AVENS bend
 The graceful head, though oft it spend
 Its sweetness on the Alpine height:
 With YELLOW LOOSESTRIFE's clusters bright;

Tall WILLOWHERB, with roseate blush ;
With purple tinge, the flowering RUSH ; 990
Pale MEADOWSWEET with feathery spray,
And fragrant as the blooming May :
Blue BROOKLIME ; and of rival die,
Mark'd with a central yellow eye,
The MOUSE-EAR blue : though which may claim
Of right the legendary name,
That points to absent friends the thought,
And warns you to "forget them not,"
Fair florists differ. But the Muse,
Ere she her stated theme pursues, 1000
Would fain an instant pause to read
That old traditionary creed,
And thus in guise of minstrel verse
The TALE of elder times rehearse.

Together they sate by a river's side,
A knight and a lady gay,
And they watch'd the deep and eddying tide
Round a flowery islet stray.

And, "Oh for that flow'r of brilliant hue,"
Said then the lady fair, 1010
"To hang my neck with the blossoms blue,
And braid my nut-brown hair!"

The knight has plunged in the whirling wave,
All for the lady's smile :
And he swims the stream with courage brave,
And he gains yon flowery isle.

And his fingers have cropt the blossoms blue,
And the prize they backward bear;
To deck his love with the brilliant hue,
And braid her nut-brown hair. 1020

But the way is long, and the current strong,
And alas for that gallant knight!
For the waves prevail, and his stout arms fail,
Though cheer'd by his lady's sight.

Then the blossoms blue to the bank he threw,
Ere he sank in the eddying tide;
And "Lady, I'm gone, thine own knight true,
Forget me not," he cried.

The farewell pledge the lady caught;
And hence, as legends say, 1030
The flow'r is a sign to awaken thought
Of friends who are far away.

For the lady fair of her knight so true
Still remember'd the hapless lot:
And she cherish'd the flow'r of brilliant hue,
And she braided her hair with the blossoms blue,
And she call'd it "Forget me not!"

But if by many a blooming flower
Is mark'd bright June's progressive power,
No less by many an ACTIVE WING, 1040
Not now as in the opening spring

Hither from distant climates sped ;
 But from the procreative bed
 Now first educed and brought to view
 With being, pow'rs, and passions new,
 And joyous in the first fresh sense
 Of nature's boon munificence.

For many a young and novel brood
 Prolifick June to wold and wood
 Contributes ; if the parent first 1050
 Now sees the pregnant eggshell burst,
 Inverted by the restless young ;
 Or now, with nerves successive strung,
 A second race, perhaps a third,
 Repays the incubating bird.

How dense the POPULATION, see,
 Of nature's general AVIARY !
 Three moons ago, the nuptial pairs
 Had but commenc'd their household cares.
 Three moons have scarcely waned ; and now , 1060
 Regardful of the plighted vow,
 And nature's primal law fulfill'd,
 To thrive and multiply, to build
 The nest, the eggs to hatch, the brood
 To tend, and rear with needful food,
 Till all to full-sized form are grown,
 And all on full-fledg'd plumage flown,
 Each holt and heath, each wood and wold,
 Is thronged with numbers manifold ;
 That needs it now a practis'd eye 1070
 The symptoms of diversity
 Between the old and young to trace,
 Between the parent and the race.

How passing wonderful and strange !
 How striking, great, and quick the change !

So multiplied the feather'd throng,
 'Twould seem, as glide the years along,
 The tribes increas'd, increasing still,
 Would in few seasons more than fill
 The space allotted to their kind ; 1080
 And pass beyond the bounds assign'd,
 Intrusive on man's lordly reign,
 No more a blessing, but a bane.

But strange and kind ! the same HIGH POWER,
 Which rules the procreative hour,
 Forbids it with undue EXCESS
 On favour'd man's domain to press !
 By means oft indistinct, and shown
 To us by their results alone,
 His hand maintains the balance straight, 1090
 That neither scale preponderate.
 And so it is, how large soc'er
 The increase of the passing year,
 Of those, who winter here, nor roam
 Adventurous from their native home,
 Or those, who stretch the pilgrim wing,
 Nor seek us till returning spring,
 Enough survive, their trust consign'd
 To work ; to propagate their kind ;
 And 'gainst the fly's rapacious host, 1100
 And reptile's, hold their guardian post ;
 But not enough, away to bear
 More than their reasonable share
 Of earth's rich gifts, nor mar the plan
 Of God's benevolence to man,

Alike in debt to bounteous heaven
For ills forborne, and mercies given.

And strange to mark, what PASSIONS move
The feather'd songsters of the grove ;
And what still varying SOUNDS attest 1110
The passions of each plumed breast !
Whether in early spring they feel
All potent LOVE's delightful zeal,
Prompting each eager male to woo
A partner, and with warblings sue
Of courtship and intense desire :
Or, if with bold AMBITION's fire
Inflam'd they strain the swelling throat,
In contest with a rival's note :
Or with TRIUMPHANT JOY, attain'd 1120
The victory and their partner gain'd,
To grove, hill, vale, their pæans sing,
Till grove, and hill, and valley ring :
Or for successful love repaid,
And nuptial faith, aspire to AID
The FEMALE'S CARE the livelong day,
With carol of the cheerful lay.
Nor wants there oft the soothing tone
Of KINDNESS and ENDEARMENT shown,
While with complacent chirp they wait, 1130
Feeding the closely brooding mate ;
Or to the unfledg'd nestling brood
Administer the gather'd food ;
Or lead them forth well-fledg'd to try
Their first flight in the fearful sky.

Nor wants there oft the ALARUM SOUND,
 To call their tribes assistant round ;
 Or FEAR'S shrill cry, or plaintive WAIL,
 If predatory foe assail
 Their shelter'd homestead's green retreat : 1140
 Or if approach of saunterer's feet,
 Though harmless, touch their cherish'd haunt,
 The CHIDINGS harsh, which bid avaunt
 The intruder, and his course pursue
 Unceasing o'er their precincts due.
 Nor wants there oft the FESTIVE STRAIN,
 Commenc'd, surceas'd, resum'd again,
 In very joyousness of soul :
 As if they knew not to control
 The stream of their exuberant glee ; 1150
 And call'd on all around to see
 And hear the raptures, which prolong
 The current of that joyous song.

Sweet to the soul, as to the sense,
 Is nature's homely eloquence :
 Devoid of science, skill, or art
 Elaborate, when the conscious heart
 Whispers its deep-felt joyousness
 Within ; and eager to express
 Its sympathy in JOYOUS SOUNDS, 1160
 The voice spontaneously responds !

SWEET are such SOUNDS : their bland control,
 Not the sense only, but the soul
 In pleas'd attention rapt employs,
 Rejoicing in another's joys.
 Whether the milk-maid's lively song,
 Her fragrance-breathing herd among ;

Or sturdy ploughman's whistle shrill,
 Home wending through the evening still;
 Or, from the sportive village sent, 1170
 Loud shouts of school-boy merriment
 The quietude of nature break:
 For if a vacant mind they speak,
 Indicative of "want of thought,"
 And little knowing "what is sought*;"
 A merry heart too they declare,
 Devoid of sorrow and of care,
 A heart from anxious trouble free,
 And buoyant with abundant glee.

And so the listener's kindly heart 1180
 Takes in those homely sounds a part,
 Not for themselves alone pursued;
 For oft inelegant and rude
 Such rustick sounds themselves appear,
 And little soothe the well-tun'd ear;
 And ev'n with more harmonious tone
 They charm not for themselves alone;
 But rather by the mystick sway,
 Which couples thought with thought, their way
 To our kind sympathies they win, 1190
 Signs of the joy that reigns within.

And such those WILDER STRAINS I hold,
 Which still the woodland and the wold,
 The mead and copse, the vale and hill,
 With nature's untaught musick fill,
 And make of this wide-vaulted sphere
 One great symphonious theatre.

* Dryden ; *Cymon and Iphigenia*.

Sweet though they be, (nor strains so sweet
 As these, the ear admiring greet
 In throng'd orchestras, where nice art 1200
 Ambitious executes her part,
 Intent to charm, surprise, confound,
 With all the revelry of sound;)

They're lovely for their sweetness less,
 Than that those dulcet strains express
 The joy that in the bosom dwells:
 Whence mounting high the rapture swells
 With harmony each tuneful throat,
 And prompts them with ecstasick note
 The MORNING'S sweet return to hail, 1210
 And bid farewell at twilight pale
 The EVENING of the sun-bright JUNE;
 Less lively when the SULTRY NOON
 Remands them through the languid hours
 To silence in their leafy bowers.

But if for many a sultry day
 The golden sun has held his way,
 Rejoicing in his cloudless strength,
 The dry earth parching: and at length
 By slow degrees with gather'd clouds 1220
 The heav'n its azure face inshrouds,
 Preluding to the show'r with gust
 Of whirling wind and volum'd dust;
 Till, bursting from its floating stores,
 On the dry lap of earth it pours
 The treasure of enlivening RAIN:
 Then when the very earth again

Lifts up a fresh and pleasant scent,
 And the faint flow'rs are redolent
 Of sweetness through the moisture won 1230
 From that rich treasure; and the sun
 Looks forth with animating glow;
 And opposite the heavenly bow
 Its braid of sevenfold tissue weaves;
 And on the smooth and glossy leaves
 In globes the sparkling raindrops stand,
 Or, gently shaken by the hand,
 Like living silver slide away;
 When from each blade, and leaf, and spray,
 Ten thousand glistening gems depend, 1240
 And all the borrowed colours blend
 Of heav'n's bright bow, that earth may vie
 For beauty with the girdled sky:
 Then do wild waste, and cultur'd field,
 Grove, garden, thicket, orchard yield
 From WARBLING THROATS a general burst
 Of harmony; as if the first
 Warm glow 'twere theirs again to prove
 Of rapture and ecstasick love,
 Which animates the vernal strain, 1250
 And all were spring and joy again.

See too the BEASTS, who faint with drought
 In vain refreshing moisture sought
 From the scant herbage parch'd and dry;
 And sought in vain the due supply
 Accustom'd from the mountain rill,
 Or meadow pool, or on the hill,
 By solitary sheep-fold walk,
 The tank of excavated chalk;

Who late with nostrils broad upturn'd 1260
 From heav'n the coming flood discern'd;
 Now that the flood's descending force
 Revives the brook's impetuous course,
 Deepening its pebbly bed, and cools
 The air, and fills the brimming pools:
 They too with joy and great delight
 Exulting hail the long'd for sight
 Of gladness to the hill and plain,
 And revel in the freshening rain.

MAN shares the joy: and, as he sees 1270
 Fresh verdure brighten on the trees,
 The meadows wear a thicker swathe,
 The flowers a sweeter odour breathe,
 Feels that, howe'er a brilliant sun
 With gladness lights the eye of JUNE,
 No less there's gladness when he pours
 Down his moist cheek the cooling showers;
 Not such, as mar the new-mown hay,
 Or sweep the tedded rows away;
 But apt, when rays too fierce have beat 1280
 On the hot earth, the o'er-powering heat
 Mildly to temper, and dispense
 Refreshment to the languid sense.

Then when the little birds express
 Their souls in songs of joyousness,
 I seem to hear kind NATURE'S VOICE
 Calling her children to rejoice
 In HIM, who gives the sun to rule
 In splendour, and who gives the cool
 Calm evening, and the morning tide, 1290
 Fresh airs, and dews, and showers beside,

The sun's o'erwhelming force to stay,
And mitigate the summer day.
And there to trace a type I seem
Of that essential LIGHT SUPREME,
Who sitteth on his throne on high,
Array'd in strength and majesty ;
But, lest the insufferable blaze
Our sight should dazzle and amaze,
About him clouds o'ershadowing flings ;
While seraphs bow with folded wings,
And cherub voices from above
Proclaim to man that "God is love."

1300

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